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Twenty years of lawn tennis

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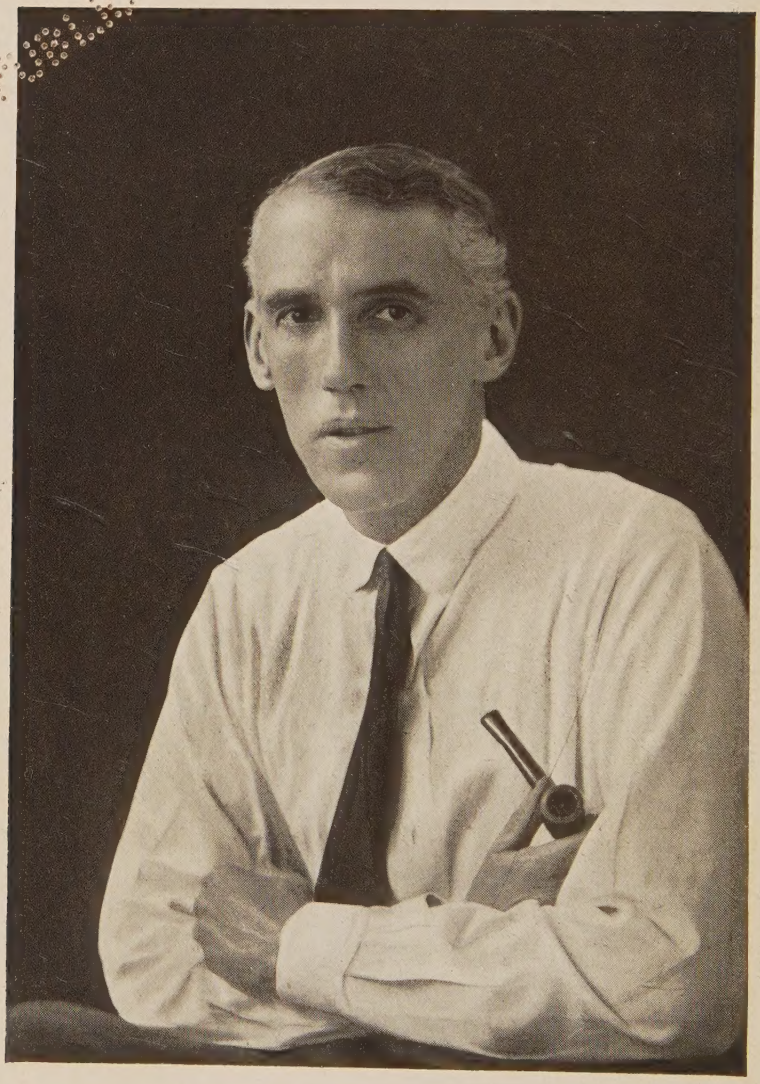

TWENTY YEARS OF LAWN TENNIS

SOME PERSONAL MEMORIES

BY

A. WALLIS MYERS

C.B.E.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	On and Off the Centre Court	1
II.	More Memories of Wimbledon	12
III.	Round the Home Courts	32
IV.	Places and Players on the Continent	53
V.	Riviera Recollections	66
VI.	Through South Africa	84
VII.	America and American Invaders	103
VIII.	Davis Cup Matches	118
IX.	Under Cover	146
X.	The Lesson of Mlle Lenglen	166
	Index	177

The Frontispiece is from a Photograph by Elliott & Fry Ltd.

TWENTY YEARS OF LAWN TENNIS

CHAPTER I

ON AND OFF THE CENTRE COURT

I MUST begin these reminiscences on a note of sadness. Wimbledon is passing! Not the institution which the world knows as the lawn tennis championships, but the ground hallowed by the history of the game—a history shoemarked on its courts.

It is rather a tragic thought, this uprooting of a shrine saluted for twoscore years and more by every disciple of lawn tennis in this country and by many a pilgrim from distant lands. After another June, or possibly two, dust-stained pedestrians, panting to reach the wicket gate, will cease to jostle each other on the railway footpath; old ladies and young will cease to camp out in that uninspiring strip of unkempt roadway which connects the Worple Road with the gates of the All England Club; waiting motor-cars will no longer convert a quiet and respectable neighbourhood into one great, inchoate garage. Inside the new ground we are promised an end to that amiable scrambling for seats, standing room, or tea which, while inconvenient on a hot day, was none the less

a traditional picnic which seemed in its very absence of ceremony to invest the occasion with a sporting spirit. Yet while we shall miss some of the old and familiar symbols at the new Wimbledon, we shall gain in many ways, not least by the thought that its coming is a sure tribute to the game's progress, a monument to its permanent popularity.

For the present premises of the All England Club are inadequate to meet the demands both of the world's best players and those who come to see the world's best players play. When the game was young and (let us whisper it) its first champions a little old —old enough at any rate to have become experts at tennis and racquets—the three and a half acres in the Worple Road were sufficient to accommodate the brigade of tall-hatted city men and sportsmen who came down annually to applaud (and possibly gamble on) the programme. But even a few years later, when the Renshaw twins and Lawford were in their prime, and trains drew up on the flank of the courts, unloading passengers agog with excitement, elbow-room was a little scarce. That, of course, was long before the giant stands had been erected round the centre court. Eager sightseers raised themselves above their fellows on imported chairs, and even paid half a sovereign for a couple of bricks!

When was a new Wimbledon first conceived? Probably a year or two before the Great War, when the champions of other countries as well as our own were making Wimbledon their annual battleground. The crowds became unwieldy in size, and spectators, offering their passbooks as security for seats, drew nothing but a courteous negative. The war only served to stem the flowing tide. If its strength was greater in 1914 (the year of Brookes and Wilding) than in 1913 (the year of

Wilding and McLoughlin), the pent-up waters burst their bonds in 1919 and 1920. Nearly four times as many seats, I was told, could have been sold for the last Championship meeting. I know not how many spectators, prepared to stand, stayed away because they knew that not even a ferret could squeeze through the centre court crowd. On the morning of the Tilden-Patterson match last July, having an engagement to play a private game with Commander Hillyard, yearning for a little exercise to relieve his secretarial cares, I had to pick my way over the bodies of those who, for several hours before and still to come, were waiting for the gates to open. The crush for the two years before and the two years after the war made a larger ground imperative. And when I recall the spacious grounds at Forest Hills, New York, at sylvan St. Cloud, and at the Wanderers' Club, Johannesburg, all of them well filled, I sometimes wonder how Worple Road has served its purpose so long.

Forty-four years—1877 to 1921. It may be a brief span compared with Lord's or Henley. Only three British Sovereigns have reigned since the first champion was crowned at Wimbledon! Lawn tennis is a mere infant beside the hoary giant of golf. No lawn tennis ball is ever likely to be discovered in the rafters of Westminster Hall, though monarchs, born long after the Tudor era, have pursued lawn tennis on courts which possess rafters. So sacrosanct was cricket in the early days of Wimbledon that the championships were adjourned over the Eton and Harrow match. Lawn tennis has its traditions, even its legends, but its greatness is of modern growth; its *ana* goes no further back than garden parties of the early seventies. Yet there are no limbs like young

limbs. Crowded into those brief forty-four years at Wimbledon, proof of the game's inherent virtues and of a development sure and strong, have been enough incident to fill a volume of readable history.

No civilised country has been unrepresented on its lawns; the centre court has been a clearing-house for the world's talent. First the purely domestic competition, with Renshaw supreme; then the rivalry of Ireland, the advent of "Ghost" Hamilton and Pim, and the latter's brilliant engagements with Baddeley; next the coming of the Dohertys—younger when they first stepped on the centre court than Tilden or Johnston—and their almost unbroken reign for a decade; the first oversea champion in Norman Brookes; Gore's stubborn defence against the foreign invader for two years; then Australasia's triumph, first through New Zealand and then through Australia again, for six years—if we count the war's interregnum, for ten; finally, the "break through" of America after a siege almost as old as the championship. It did not need the apotheosis of France at the instance of Mlle Lenglen nor the appearance of Japan in the All Comers final last year nor of Germany in that of 1914, to demonstrate that the lawn tennis championship is the most cosmopolitan competition in the whole world. Wimbledon is indeed the university seat of a great game—a game now claiming more votaries than any ball-game invented.

My own personal visits to Wimbledon began in the late nineties, when R. F. Doherty was the reigning champion. I do not propose to speak of the earlier giants here; some of their deeds have been narrated elsewhere.[1] But I had the privilege of playing against Pim under cover at Queen's. It was a match with a

[1] See "Annals of Wimbledon" in *The Complete Lawn Tennis Player.*

tragic finish. Dr. Pim, then a medical practitioner and using a rusty racket (for it was some time after his championship days), was partnered by his Irish compatriot, G. C. Ball-Greene. Dr. J. M. Flavelle was my partner; we had paired up at Scheveningen the previous summer. Having the hang of the floor, of which our opponents knew little, we managed to win two out of the first four sets. Darkness then descended, and the referee adjourned the final set until the morrow. This extra set threw out of gear a programme already arranged. Instead of finishing on the east or gallery court we were bidden to play on the west court, more confined in run-back. Nettled by this official decree, my partner, who had enlivened our dinner talk the previous night with his cosmopolitan experiences, so lengthened his drives that most of them sailed serenely out of court over the heads of the two Irishmen. There were other extravagances, and the set was soon over. In the intervening twenty years, Flavelle and I have enjoyed many a knock together. Pim is now out of the match court—a memory of brilliance shining without practice or effort. At his best, Pim was superior to Wilfred Baddeley, as he was superior to any other man of his own era; but since Baddeley was the essence of steadiness and a master of scientific method, while Pim had natural genius summoned and exploited at will, the matches between these two, if below the standard of to-day, will always be remembered for their toughness and contrast of style.

The Dohertys were the gentlemen of the centre court. They came to it first as Cambridge undergraduates, and throughout their long reign until the end the impression of unsophisticated chivalry, of the best university tradition, was preserved. Their

demeanour, on court as well as off, was ever unassuming and free from "side." Just as their skill as players came unconsciously and without strain, so their manners as men were natural and without affectation. Others, more eager and rigorous in training, might deposit their towels, sponges, and stimulants on the umpire's ladder; the Dohertys used nothing more formidable than a pocket-handkerchief, carried in the trousers pocket, and rarely, if ever, took refreshment between the sets. Their attitude to the officials of the court was that of quiet compliance. They never disputed an umpire's decision either by word or sign, nor betrayed annoyance if their opponents were less amenable. It was a sheer pleasure to play against them, nor was that pleasure ever qualified by defeat at their hands. On the very few occasions of their own defeat, I never heard either express resentment nor urge an extenuating circumstance, though it was well known that Reggie in his later matches had shed some of his physical ardour. Their influence over their fellow-players, while exerted quite unconsciously, was incalculable. Lawn tennis may have been a less exacting and less strenuous ordeal when they were in their prime; it has never been played either before or since with more chivalrous sportsmanship. Nor could their irreproachable demeanour fail to influence the crowd who watched them play and, beyond it, the public outside. As players they were, while champions, in a class apart; as men and sportsmen they were typically of the best class. All who knew them intimately will testify to their personal charm. None will fail to regret their early death. I heard of Reggie's death in Cape Town. The South Africans honoured him as much as the members of the All England Club. Only two years

previously they had seen him win the South African championship without turning a hair and so gracefully that they would fain have kept him in their country for all time. What impressed them most, I think, was his ability to attract the ball to his own hand. Others might cover miles of territory, chasing his returns; he would seem to be standing still. I believe it to be a fact that throughout the whole of George Hillyard's long tour, R. F. used the same pair of rubber shoes, while every other member of the team wore out several pairs.

Speculation has often been raised as to which was the better of the two brothers. It is one of those questions, like the merits of classic horses, that can never be answered conclusively. Neither was a gladiator; neither sought fame; they rarely played each other a serious match; you could only apply to them a relative test. Since Laurie was longer in the field, and therefore required to combat a game intensified by the specialists from overseas, his record is undoubtedly superior to Reggie's, and I think that, lighter in weight, faster on foot, and nimbler in attack and possibly in mind as well, he was the greater match player of the two. But as a perfect stylist, for ease and elegance of stroke play, for a quiet and natural genius which allowed him to place the ball exactly where it should go, to the maximum embarrassment of his opponent, for sheer instinctive aptitude, Reggie was first. Had Nature supplied him with a hardier physique, the few defeats which he sustained might never have occurred. Certainly he was not in a fit condition to defend his championship for the last time in 1901. Indeed, the match between Gore and George Hillyard in a previous round (a match which Hillyard has good cause to remember, for he lost it by a net-

cord) was regarded, even at the time, as the gate to the throne. Reggie showed us in the first set how he could have beaten Gore again ; then his small reserve of stamina was exhausted and Gore's cannon-ball drives, shot unerringly into the corners, had their reward. Similarly, to leave the centre court for a moment, R. F.'s failure to win the American Singles Championship at Newport in 1902 was due to limitations of vitality. He had to finish off his final against Whitman (adjourned overnight) in the morning and then to tackle Larned, the holder, in the afternoon. On that day the linen collars of the spectators were converted into pulp ; the great heat, which Larned seemed to revel in, drained R. F.'s resources. Yet, though he did not meet the giants of to-day, Reggie was a peerless player. His backhand down the line, matchless in length and strength, is a classic stroke with a certain niche in the lawn tennis armoury.

I had the good fortune to meet Laurie on the centre court once and elsewhere on many occasions ; and in one single—at Monte Carlo in 1909, when he was not tuned up—took a set from him to my great delight. Reggie I had only played in doubles, at Wimbledon and abroad. Much as I revered the play of both, I am bound to say that it never produced in me the same feeling of absolute personal futility as the play of Wilding or Brookes, each with his very different equipment. This is not to compare the merits of the Dohertys and their successors ; it is a personal impression based on the fact that the Dohertys were playing an orthodox game smoothly and faultlessly, whereas Brookes and Wilding, and more recently Tilden (whom I had the privilege to play at Edgbaston last year), waged a much more

strenuous fight and threw into it greater speed, both of stroke and of foot, and a greater resource.

H. L. was the hero of many centre court combats. After he first won the championship in 1902 he was never beaten at Wimbledon in a public single. I saw him wage all his matches. I remember vividly each phase of his encounter, so keenly anticipated, with Norman Brookes in '05. A new-comer to Wimbledon, armed with a sinister service, an inscrutable countenance and a mien suggesting supreme confidence, the Australian had reached the challenge round over the dead bodies of Caridia, Hillyard, Riseley, Gore, and S. H. Smith. Only Smith really threatened (and almost stayed) his onward rush. Fifteen years ago, Brookes mainly employed a "googly" service into which he had been initiated by the wily Dr. Eaves at Melbourne, the "Doctor" returning quietly to England to back his fancy. Laurie, of course, had stood out of the All Comers, but his eyes and mind had not been idle. A tense crowd gathered to see this first really great international single at Wimbledon. Doherty won in three sets, though the first was close and threatening. His two visits to America had inured him to the terrors of the break service; he handled Brookes's deliveries with increasing confidence. Safer off the ground than his opponent, he was as well equipped on the volley and far more deadly overhead. He attacked the Australian's backhand corner (the forehand corner of a right-handed player) very adroitly, anticipating the angle of his reply and stowing away anything soft with definite finality. When Brookes was "the man in possession," H. L. would lob with beautiful precision into that same corner, forcing the entrenched volleyer to turn his back on the net. Brookes had a sore heel

and did not serve perhaps with so much fire as in his previous matches; moreover, he had borne the heat and burden of the All Comers struggle, from which H. L. had been exempt. Nevertheless, the better general and more versatile player earned his victory that day. Brookes was a sounder player two years later, when he came again and conquered in a field from which Doherty and Smith had retired; and he was certainly a more subtle challenger still, with better ground strokes, in 1914, his third championship year. I do not think H. L. beat the best Brookes, just as Brookes in '14 did not beat the best Wilding. But the defeat of the invader in 1905 was a great feather in Laurie's cap—almost the last to adorn his handsome head.

H. L. played another volleyer on the same court a few weeks later—Holcombe Ward, in the Davis Cup Challenge Round. The American was an even wider break server than Brookes and a perfect magician at low and stop volleys. While he had the strength to follow in his service, Ward was a very dangerous customer, and since he excelled himself on this occasion, Doherty found himself two sets down. This was a dramatic *dénouement*; the Americans in the crowd held their breath. But Ward could not maintain the attack at such high pressure; he dropped back, first a foot, then a yard, finally behind the service line. Quickly and confidently, H. L. went on to his inevitable triumph, losing only three games in the last three sets.

Another American volleyer—Ralph Little—led him two sets to one a year later. A spent force, he was a beaten man in the fourth and fifth sets. Two days afterwards a third American, W. A. Larned, though not an inveterate volleyer like the other two, had a

lead of two sets to one against the champion. In acknowledging H. L.'s merit in these three encounters, one must not forget that the losers, playing under English rule, were deprived of their seven minutes' rest given after the third set in America; they were trained for the shorter distance. Nor can there be any question that Ward, Little, Larned, and Beals Wright (who came over the same year and beat both Brookes and Wilding at Wimbledon in the Davis Cup) were not the equals of the present-day Tilden and Johnston. None, with the possible exception of Larned, had the ground shots of these modern Americans. That fact should be borne in mind in estimating Tilden's chances against an H. L. of 1921.

CHAPTER II

MORE MEMORIES OF WIMBLEDON

THE Dohertys trod the centre court as doubles champions for eight years ; save for two defeats at the hands of the Gloucestershire pair, S. H. Smith and Frank Riseley, they were supreme for a decade. By the perfect symmetry of their combined forces, by the severity of their service returns, their low volleying, R. F.'s service and H. L.'s deadly overhead play from any part of the court, they formed a great pair ; but it must not be supposed they were not in peril of defeat at Wimbledon, even in their championship years. The brothers were required to play a five-set match against Nisbet and Roper Barrett in 1900. A year later they were fighting every inch of the court to save their titles against Dwight Davis and Holcombe Ward. This redoubtable American pair—the first of the really great pairs to cross the Atlantic—gave an enormous fillip to Wimbledon. They had served, smashed, and lobbed their way through to the challenge round 'mid the cheers of a dazzled crowd. But for the incidence of rain, it is possible they would have won the doubles championship. When the match was stopped, both sides had won a set and were games-all in the third. On the morrow the challenge round was played *de novo*. There was another long and fierce struggle, and the Dohertys just survived it. An even closer double was that in 1905 when the Dohertys met Ward and Wright in the Davis Cup at Wimbledon.

Wright was a sounder volleyer than Davis; the brothers must be given greater credit for this victory. A false step in the critical fifth set in which the Americans held the lead, and they would have gone down. As it was, Ward hit the net when making a simple smash —one of those tragic blunders (of which I witnessed a parallel in Boston nine years later when Parke was playing Brookes) that, occurring when they do, are never forgotten. The following year—and this was surely the forerunner of impending disaster — the brothers were in some jeopardy against Ward and Little, who, in a four-set match, won twenty-three games to their thirty.

Of the two occasions when the colours of the Dohertys were lowered on the centre court—and by the same pair on each—I retain a vivid recollection. In neither match was R. F. at his best; the machine, if not out of gear, was faulty. In between their two reverses the brothers had defeated Smith and Riseley on three successive occasions with something to spare. In 1906, when the brothers played together for the last time at Wimbledon, the elder Doherty was but a shadow of his former greatness. He was not only lobbing short and allowing Riseley to enjoy what E. G. Meers used to call a "meal at the net," but he was being lobbed over himself by Smith, who on that day tossed to perfection. This frailty on the part of Reggie had its debilitating effect on Laurie's play. Ever the wheel-horse of the team, he worked heroically to stave off disaster, but, with his brother incapacitated, he was asked to pull more than his weight. There was a similar, and even worse, disaster at Nice two years later when, returning as a pair for the last time to open competition, the brothers were beaten by Ritchie and Wilding.

Let it not be inferred I am disparaging the great performance of Smith and Riseley. Riseley in 1906 proved himself to be the second best player in England (he beat Gore both at Leicester and Wimbledon), and it will always be something of a mystery why he was not selected as a reserve member of the Davis Cup defending team. In the doubles challenge round he was inspired, and so deadly was his right arm on the serve and volley that, stricken with neuritis, it could not be lifted again in play for some years. In the orthodox English school Riseley always shone, but he did not possess Smith's ability, as he did not employ Smith's method of driving, to hit the break service as forcefully as the plain. Riseley retired from Wimbledon before the oversea giants mustered in their prime, though he made a welcome return in 1919. He was thus less tested than some of his contemporaries, but while he was a great player, he was not one of the greatest.

I come now to three or four figures who, though only one of them won the singles championship and that on three occasions, are associated inseparably with the centre court of the twentieth century. The first is A. W. Gore, and when I contemplate that last year this Nestor of Wimbledon made his twenty-ninth consecutive appearance in the All Comers singles, I marvel at the hardihood of our race. Gore won a big London tournament before Tilden was born; he first played in the challenge round at Wimbledon when Johnston was five years old; he won his third championship at the age of forty-one, and that was a dozen years ago. All of his great centre court combats are pigeon-holed in my memory. The lines of the arena were surely laid down for his drives to hit, so unerringly did he raise chalk. With an elongated arm which seemed to have no joint between the

human shoulder and the racket-head, he drove the ball diagonally from his own backhand corner into his opponent's. In vain would the uninitiated—and some of them were foreign champions—baste his backhand. To be forewarned was to be forearmed. Gore had an amiable habit of running round these shots and returning them with far greater speed to the backhand, alleged to be stronger, of his opponent. More experienced antagonists, avoiding this decoy, fed his forehand in the hope, rarely realised, that it would tire and lose its accuracy.

I shall never forget Gore's successful defence of his title in 1909. His challenger was Ritchie who, in a domestic year, by dint of fine victories over Roper Barrett and Dixon, seemed destined to have his name enrolled among the elect. I had been Ritchie's guest on his house-boat at Laleham-on-Thames the night before this match. Motoring to Wimbledon on the great day, something went wrong with the car. It was nothing very serious, but the owner had to use his right arm vigorously to restart the engine. I remember expressing some distress at the incident at the time. Did this little contretemps have any effect on the Challenger when, with the match and title seemingly in his grasp, he found himself being slowly overhauled by the holder? Rarely did tide turn so completely. Gore had seemed to be *in extremis*. He stopped at the umpire's chair at the end of every other game to sponge his face and arms; often his hand would go to his side as if collapse were imminent; the points were being piled up against him. Then, with two sets in hand and a lead of two-love in the third set, Ritchie began to falter. Gore seized his chance with both hands, and, with that adamant fortitude for which he has always been

famous, drove himself into security and a third championship. Ritchie for some time did not see defeat ahead. Gore saw victory from the moment he had drawn level and forged ahead in the third set. In the fifth set he was dominating the court and finished as if he could have tackled a sixth.

Another, and perhaps greater, triumph for Gore was his victory over Gobert in the final of the All Comers in 1912. Gore was then forty-four years of age, exactly twice as old as his French opponent, at that time mounting to greatness on his splendid service and beautiful volleying. Gobert led 5–3 in the third set, each man having won a set. He only won one more game in the whole match! The younger man made the fatal mistake of attempting to play a prince of drivers from the back of the court. Gore had lured him into that position by a few clean passing shots and adroit lobs, and then teased him into extravagance on the base-line—there was something of the cat and mouse about it all. A fortnight later at Folkestone, in the Davis Cup singles, Gobert had his revenge, fully justifying the high hopes of his countrymen.

To return for a moment to his centre court struggle. Emerging from it triumphant but exhausted, Gore repaired to a tent and there for some time lay prone on a table with his eyes closed. Unconscious of his presence, I chanced to enter this sanctuary. The "dead man" opened his eyes and I held out my hand in congratulation. He shook it warmly, and when I add that he and I had been adrift for a week or two owing to an incident in Sweden, now buried beyond recall, my satisfaction may be imagined. A day or two later Gore made an heroic stand for his title against Wilding and nearly carried the match

into a fifth set. Of all fighters on court he was the most stubborn; the men who have beaten him at Wimbledon may deem themselves great.

One of the strangest anomalies on the championship roll is that the name of Gore should appear three times, whereas that of S. H. Smith is missing altogether. Not only was Smith's record against the great Americans superior to Gore's; H. L. Doherty always considered him his most dangerous English opponent; and there is little doubt that as a base-line player, opposed either to an aggressive volleyer or to a man using his own weapons, Smith possessed greater ability. Why did this famous driver fail to secure the crown at Wimbledon? There were probably two reasons, each interlaced. Smith was a native of Stroud and, unlike Gore, not a regular denizen of the centre court; the environment was strange to him, and he came to it without a key to its subtle mysteries. Then, too, Smith usually arrived at Wimbledon after a strenuous week at the Northern Championships. By the vagaries of the Lancashire climate these were played almost invariably on a soft court; it was a drastic transition to the hard, unyielding surface of Wimbledon. That there was something in these June conditions in the south to militate against Smith's success is emphasised by the fact that when the Davis Cup singles followed in July —and he had had time to get acclimatised—he was much more certain on the drive—much more, in fact, the very best Smith. Even so, it is amazing that he should only once have reached the challenge round and only twice have appeared in the final of the All Comers. Some of his contemporaries, admittedly below him, were familiar figures in the last stages. How often Smith led the field at Eastbourne,

Edgbaston, Newcastle, and Newport! His giant figure was an annual Saturday afternoon feature; even at Devonshire Park the younger Doherty, after running what he described picturesquely as "a hundred mile race," had to admit defeat in the end. At Wimbledon, Smith will go down to fame as the terror of the American volleyers. He did not meet players so well equipped as Tilden and Johnston, but Holcombe Ward and Little made no secret of their preference for H. L. Doherty as an opponent. "You cannot play Smith from the back of the court," they used to say. "If you go to the net he passes you like a knife going through butter." Nor can one forget that in 1905 when, on his first visit to Wimbledon, Brookes was making his dramatic advance through the All Comers, Smith so nearly beat him in the final. Indeed, but for the fact that one of his drives fell a ball's breadth over the side-line at a critical stage in the fifth set, the Englishman would probably have carried the day. A month later at Edgbaston, on a court more to his taste, I saw Smith beat Brookes.

If Gore's longevity on the lawn tennis court excites wonder, that of Roper Barrett is almost as marvellous. In fact, since Barrett was selected a member of the British International Team last year—a distinction which he first enjoyed twenty years earlier—I am not sure that his record does not eclipse his old partner's. After the Renshaws and the Dohertys, and until the oversea stars illuminated the firmament, Barrett was the greatest draw Wimbledon ever had. This attraction, I think, was more a tribute to his personality and to his strategic brain than to the quality of his actual strokes. He has never been the classic artist in the sense that the Dohertys, McLoughlin, or Brookes were; he had not the perfect drives of the first two, nor

the spectacular service of the last two. Nevertheless, he possessed what none of these four champions revealed in the same measure—a capacity for cunning court-craft calculated to embarrass even the greatest in the land. He was, and remains, a prince of tacticians, ever ready to decoy the unsuspecting into a death-trap; a master of varied length and strength, using for his wiles the zone in front of the net just as much as the more orthodox base-line territory; and, withal, showing a fortitude and a nerve that revelled in an uphill fight and rarely waged a fifth set without winning it.

So many Barrett matches crowd to mind, it is difficult to select those outstanding. In singles his nearest escape from winning the championship was in 1908. Though not fully fledged that year, Wilding was the favourite for the event. Barrett beat him "all ends up" in an early round, using the lob and the short drop with sinister effect. Barrett was the *bête noire* of most young players; even Wilding's resolute and unruffled front were not proof against him, although, when he strengthened his smashing and backhand a year or two later, the ugly fence was usually carried. With a little more luck in the challenge round against Gore, and perhaps with another corps of linesmen, Barrett would have been champion. He felt the need, however, of a service which his opponent, by years of practice, could not handle with power and purpose, and one must not forget that Gore in a decisive fifth set had a heart as stout as Barrett's. While this nimble strategist could make little headway against Brookes, who was more of his own age, he could always be relied upon to rattle the younger giants, and such players as Wilding, McLoughlin, and Patterson were unmistakably pleased when their ordeal was over.

It is a singular coincidence that both Wilding and McLoughlin, in the years when each won the All Comers, should have met Barrett in the first round. In both cases the experience was nearly fatal. Indeed, the American had to wage five anxious sets before he could put the spectre behind him, and I shall always consider that the manner in which Barrett handled the Californian's destructive service in this contest—a weapon he was asked to combat for the first time—redounded to his infinite credit. And even though Patterson did not forfeit a set to Barrett in 1919, the nature of the first set, in which the Englishman held a strong winning lead, suggested that, given his pre-war legs, Barrett would have been almost equal to the task in hand.

Valiant as Barrett's record has been in singles on the centre court, it is as a doubles player that his name and fame will chiefly be cherished in public memory. In this department he has been the hero of a hundred fights—some of them, it is true, entered into when the weapons of modern lawn tennis were not quite so keenly polished as they are to-day and when the demand for mobility was not so insistent. Yet, even in the last two years, after the war had made "old men" seem so much "older," this player shone in the highest company. Both at Queen's and at Norwood in 1920 he took sets from the American players, none of whom were born when he first handled a racket. For positional skill, tactical finesse, and the ability to place the ball in the most inconvenient spot for his opponents and for anticipating and profiting by their reply, Barrett was unequalled. His was the live brain behind the racket, the man who created openings by his own enterprise and invariably took them when they occurred; a fighter to the finger-tips and an adversary

who never gave quarter. I do not doubt that some of his success was due to the moral factor. He persuaded those on the opposite side of the net, especially young foreigners, that there was no escape from the net spread to catch them.

Barrett was never more dangerous than when a strong winning lead was against him. Such situations he revelled in, never overlooking the fact that men are often slack when they think themselves most secure. There will always remain in my memory—and the echo of it exists in my ears—the dramatic victory which Gore and Barrett achieved over Brookes and Wilding at Wimbledon in the Davis Cup challenge round in 1907. The Australians with scant ceremony had won the first two sets in a canter; and with Brookes serving at 5–4 in the third set only a stroke was needed for immediate possession of the Davis Cup. The plum was in their mouths. It was dashed from them with a vigour as surprising as it was thorough. The match did not end until another hour and twenty minutes had elapsed, and by that time the British pair, 'mid a scene of intense excitement, had scrambled home at 13–11 in the final set. In my mind yet I can see the fine lobs of Gore sailing over Wilding's head, and the perpendicular racket of the ubiquitous Barrett covering the net, the mind of its owner conceiving and countering his opponents' every move. Six years later, in another Davis Cup challenge round, Barrett, this time partnered by Dixon, very nearly achieved the same coup. Hackett and McLoughlin were within a stroke of defeat, and if Dixon could have made a service return out of McLoughlin's reach, the Davis Cup would (as the following day's play indicated) have remained in England. In this tie, however, the Americans were rather slim and

McLoughlin was magnificent. Paying Barrett the compliment of neglect, they had trained all their guns on to Dixon. C. P. chanced to be playing very well—the design did not succeed. But when, more by accident than purpose, they began to lob Barrett, the way to possible victory was revealed. This match had its tensely dramatic moment. It was the fourth set, and England was leading in it by five games to three. They wanted only one more game for victory. To use my own words written after the match: "At this crisis the Americans showed their fine resolution; neither flinched, and McLoughlin was as ready to go out for and achieve a winning drive as at any period of the match. Barrett's service, its deceptive softness of no avail, was won to love. McLoughlin's service followed, and should have prevailed from thirty, but when smashing an easy ball at 40–30 the American broke a string of his racket. The incident was distinctly unlucky, and coming at so critical a stage might have been fatal. Missing another smash with a new racket (he was allowed, by the way, to serve a trial ball), McLoughlin was faced with 'vantage against him—only a point separated the holders from victory. There was a breathless silence. McLoughlin served to Dixon and volleyed his return straight and true through the English pair. Then, with immediate danger past, he served two splendid balls which won the tenth game." Seldom has finer battle-nerve been seen at Wimbledon.

Barrett has had many worthy partners in the course of a quarter of a century—H. A. Nisbet, G. M. Simond, Gore, and Dixon, to name perhaps the chief four. It is surely a tribute to his individual talent that he should have done best with the player who was, both by stroke and disposition, much more of

a singles than a doubles player. Like Smith and Riseley—a slightly superior combination at their best—Gore and Barrett often violated a canon of doubles play, that the two allies should assume a parallel formation, forming a concrete, if movable, wall against their opponents. In truth, Smith and Gore volleyed much more, and very often with greater effect, than public opinion credited. But the fact that both men were so deadly off the ground, and drove so finely either between the two volleyers opposite or at their feet as they were coming in, was an asset of priceless value. Both Riseley and Barrett, intrepid poachers as they were, would probably declare that, had the formation been more orthodox, its success would have been less assured. Certainly the crowds at Wimbledon would have enjoyed fewer thrills.

I must not omit to mention one or two other home players who, though not champions, have left their mark on the centre court. The ever-lamented Dr. Eaves was at the height of his form before the twentieth century—he was one of the few men who came within a stroke of the championship only to see the great prize slipping away—but he was a familiar and ever a doughty competitor almost up to the war's advent. A Wimbledon without the spruce and dapper figure of this fine student of form, ever ready to back his opinion in good coin of the realm and bearing good fortune and bad with the same worldly philosophy, is, I confess, not quite the same thing. Virtually the discoverer of Brookes, he also did much to mature Wilding's skill. All of those who followed his tips for improvement lived to bless his name. An inveterate volleyer himself, he insisted, with genial emphasis, that volleying was the only profitable line under modern conditions. "Get on top of the net

and stay there," he would say. "Don't let the other man enjoy the best view of your court while you can see next to nothing of his, and that little obscured by his body. Go up and attack!" It was a gospel for the young and strong, of course, but then Eaves was never blind to the great athletic advance of lawn tennis in the past fifteen years. He could see, as others declined to see, that the days of long base-line rallies were gone. And now this very wise counsellor and best of good fellows has left us.

I have already mentioned Ritchie's close proximity to the championship, and elsewhere about this volume will be found a reference to this fine and much-travelled player, nearly as good at the age of fifty as he ever was. Ritchie only won the All Comers singles once, but he was in the final for three successive years (1902 to 1904), and even as recently as 1919, after the long war interregnum, he reached the semi-final, and in that round was the only player in the whole competition to take a set from Patterson. No man living has played more lawn tennis than this hard-grained expert of the British school. I saw him beat H. L. Doherty both at Monte Carlo and Queen's, and always regret I was not in Boston, U.S.A., when he beat Beals Wright. Smith, Gore, Mahony, George Hillyard, Greville—all the English and Irish giants of the decade before the last tasted defeat at his hands at one time or another. Even last June he was good enough to overcome R. N. Williams, the American ex-champion, on a soft court at Queen's. I have heard Ritchie described as a base-liner. If this means he has sound ground shots on both wings, all of them produced in the best way, it is true, but it is still only half the truth. Ritchie is also a sound volleyer—not spectacular like Karl Behr nor a player who does not prefer to

stay back; yet a driver who, if the occasion demands, can hit as hard "on the fly" as anyone and push home an advantage very adroitly at the net. The greatest of Ritchie's victories have been achieved by timely volleying—notably that over H. L. Doherty under cover at Queen's. Denied the highest honours in singles, his forte, Ritchie has twice been doubles champion with Wilding, and each time the cap has been merited. Wilding's vigour in all departments was a factor, but not less valuable than his partner's supreme steadiness and an ability to toss well at the right moment which has never been equalled. Given a partner in whom he has complete confidence—not always an easy man to find, by the way—and Ritchie can play a very good double indeed. At Wimbledon he will always be remembered as a stout-hearted, if somewhat dour, fighter. "Do you know any of the leading players?" a youth was overheard to ask his companion at the championships. "Well, not exactly," was the reply; "but Ritchie asked me the time yesterday as he was stepping into his motor."

I come now to the reign of the Australasians—an uninterrupted reign since 1910 until last year, if we exclude the war suspension. Brookes was first champion in 1907, as I have mentioned, and no player deserved the title more than this grim and knowledgeable Australian. But Norman Brookes did not come again until 1914, and in the meantime the oversea flag was hoisted at Wimbledon by Wilding, who had been tugging at the ropes for some years. He became champion for the first time in 1910, after an anxious first-round engagement with Barrett, a battle-royal with Beals Wright in the final, and a sterner encounter with Gore in the challenge round than he expected. Until the eve of the Great War, when Brookes beat

him in his last single at Wimbledon, the New Zealander kept his title intact. It was in serious jeopardy both in 1911 and 1913. On the first occasion, with the centre court resembling a baker's oven, Barrett took him to two sets all before retiring—an absolutely exhausted challenger, though the holder was nearly as distressed. This match was almost farcical in its lack of sustained aggression. Barrett would draw Wilding to the net with an insidious drop; then when the ball, just reached, came slowly back, would send up a balloon shot over Wilding's head. Back would dash the holder in pursuit. So the game of pitch and toss went on—a kind of bumble-puppy with half the crowd cheering their favourite tactician and the other half conscious that the standard of play was abnormally low. I should never think of blaming Barrett for this adroit manœuvring; it was quite legitimate according to the rules, and half the secret of success at lawn tennis is an unexpected variety of tactics, aiming at disconcerting your opponent. But I remember that I had to leave the stands and search for a passing breeze outside. There, in the great silent void, I met the husband of a former lady champion—an old habitué of Wimbledon. "What do you think of it?" I asked. "A good turn for the Palace," was his laconic reply. But in the tropical heat of that day—more enervating, as Wilding told me afterwards, than any heat of Australia—orthodox hard hitting was almost impossible.

In 1913 the challenger was McLoughlin, that youthful, red-haired giant from California who captivated the crowd as much by his personality as by his play. Like Brookes in 1905, McLoughlin had swept through the British ranks, gaining, as it seemed, more strength and confidence with each successive victory.

Every American, and not a few judges in this country, supported his chance in the last match of all. Personally I favoured Wilding, not only because I knew he was trained as never before, but because only a fortnight previously I had seen him defeat Gobert, armed with a service just as dangerous, in Paris. When the great test came, Wilding was superb in every department. Threatened and pressed all through he never once gave ground; his return of the service was absolutely faultless; he found the weakness on McLoughlin's backhand and never left it. As Wilding played in this match on that day—and he never played quite so well either before or since—I do not believe any player who ever stepped on the centre court would have beaten him. How different from the Wilding of a year later! Mr. Balfour, no mean judge of the game, told me in 1914 that he could not believe it was the same player. Well, Wilding was not keyed-up to concert pitch, either physically or morally, in 1914. I do not deny the splendid play of Brookes—an artist where Wilding was only an athlete—but the Australian did not beat the best Wilding that day, and he knew it

The war's black reaper cut deep into the ranks of lawn tennis players. Among the first to volunteer for service and among the earliest to sacrifice their lives at the call of duty were two who first paired up together as Cambridge undergraduates — Anthony Wilding and Kenneth Powell. Only the Dohertys beat them at Fenner's; as triers they were unequalled at Cambridge. I bracket them together here because, though Wilding went higher up the ladder of fame than Powell—having greater opportunities for advance and perhaps a sterner zeal—they typify in their respective personalities, which were quite dis-

tinct, all that is good and strong in British athletics. Assuredly two such admirable sportsmen will retain a permanent place in our memories.

An interval of five years and Gerald Patterson is enthroned. We may admit that he won his crown under abnormal conditions, before the competing nations had had time to shake free from their war harness, even before the echo of exploding bombs had quite died away. Neither our own leading players (most of them nearer forty than thirty, and one or two of them sighting fifty), nor the American ex-officers who crossed from France to compete, were in full practice or anything like it; their muscles were unloose, their eye out of focus, their staying power doubtful. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the Melbourne youth who dominated the centre court on his first visit to it had himself borne the heat and burden of the military fight, winning distinction in the field. Nor can his record of 1919 be challenged as something quite unique in lawn tennis annals. After reaching the final in the covered court championship at Queen's, and there, on a floor ill-suited to his game, losing to P. M. Davson, Patterson went through all his tournaments in this country, including Wimbledon and Surbiton, with the loss of only one set—to Ritchie on the centre court. Twice he beat Barrett in three sets; Brookes, Kingscote, Gobert, Mavrogordato, and Doust were all defeated without one of them winning a set. Crossing to America, Patterson took the winner of the American singles championship into five-all in the fifth set. At Sydney two months later he won all his Davis Cup matches against this country. In doubles, partnered by Brookes, he only suffered one reverse. This, by fortune's decree, was in the competition he most coveted—the championship at Wimbledon. It

was a result which even now I cannot quite explain. Possibly the protracted tension of watching the finest ladies' single ever fought on the centre court just before meeting O'Hara Wood and Thomas upset Patterson's aim; it may be that the sustained aggression of his two compatriots—they seemed to be entrenched on the net the whole time—was unexpected. Brookes and Patterson were beaten squarely that day by an inspired team, but both the manner and method of their previous victories over the same team in England suggested the surprise. After losing the British doubles, Brookes and Patterson went on to Boston to win the American. A boy of sixteen was one of their opponents in the challenge round; this youth and Tilden forced the battle into five sets.

On the whole, then, any disparagement of Patterson's game in 1919, founded on his almost humiliating defeat of 1920, is not justified. He was at some disadvantage last July. Brookes was not at Wimbledon to encourage and coach his pupil; the holder made the fatal error of playing no public single before he met Tilden; he faced an opponent gifted with the cutest brain as well as the surest touch, a challenger exalted by the ecstasy of successive triumphs and the environment in which they were achieved. There is some irony in the thought that, buoyed up to some extent in the same way, Patterson should have defeated the holder, his own mentor, in the challenge round of 1919, only to find himself the strategic inferior to Tilden, in Brookes's absence, a year later.

Tilden's championship may very well prove as epoch-making as any new precedent set up in a progressive age. For one thing, it meant the consummation, at long last, of America's ambition. The Clarke brothers (pioneers in knickerbockers), James

Dwight, Wrenn, Holcombe Ward, Beals Wright, Larned, Clothier, McLoughlin, and Williams—all had laid gallant siege to the citadel, some more than once. Each had been repulsed until William Tilden, on his first visit to Europe at the age of twenty-seven, burst the barrier.

Tilden did his job in the most sporting way possible. He was cheery, chivalrous, confident—a popular idol. Only once was he seriously threatened with disaster, though Shimidzu, that mystic, nimble-footed envoy from Japan, hunted him all the way home. His most exacting match was with Kingscote in the third round, a match heroically saved by the Englishman when the American was within a stroke of victory and a match in which, for some games at any rate, Kingscote was calling the tune. Rain damped the court at two-all in the fifth set; both men shod themselves with steel points. This was Tilden's home footgear, and extra confidence seemed to come into his game in consequence. Certainly in the last three games he made a series of ground shots, dazzling in their daring, which had not been exploited before. In that fifth set, as in the fifth set against Johnston two months later in New York, Tilden revealed his championship mettle.

His triumph was something more than personal. Tilden and his compatriots of last summer—Johnston, Williams, and Garland, the last two, a scratch pair, winning the doubles championship—exposed a fallacy and restored a tradition. They were, each and all with varying aptitude, whole-court players — not service specialists nor inveterate volleyers nor base-line drivers, but a blend of all three. Thus, while they took something away, they also left something behind. Better trained physically, hitting the ball

with more aggression, returning the service on the rise and thus saving time, more alert in anticipation and more resourceful at the net, they were superior to the specialists of their own and other countries. They retained the essence of former specifics while adding something that was new and valuable. They have not yet advanced all the way; they are still learning and improving. The successful American invasion of last year calls for no lamentation. It should have a great influence on the game in this country, not only at Wimbledon but on every court in the kingdom.

CHAPTER III

ROUND THE HOME COURTS

IT is only the weak for whom the world is too strong. When one contemplates that lawn tennis was born in England less than fifty years ago—a conservative England with its games and pastimes deeply rooted in the soil and in the hearts of the people—its steady development and present strength are astonishing, suggesting, one cannot doubt, that the core of the game is sound and its virtues real. I read in the last annual report of the Lawn Tennis Association that 130 open tournaments were held under its ægis in 1920, and that the average field at each of these meetings was 120 competitors. Eastbourne catered for 1298 matches last September, little more than a year after Peace was officially signed at the end of the world's greatest war. In 1883 at Eastbourne there were only 114 matches on the programme; there were 384 in 1893, 571 in 1903, and 1249 in 1913. Other popular tournaments can show a relative development. If we remember that, in many cases, the war disintegrated the machinery and dispersed the executive (many organisers sacrificing their lives in the great adventure), the recovery of the tournament immediately after the war is remarkable; the fact that new records have been established is even more noteworthy.

Nor must we judge alone by open tournaments. These, after all, only exhibit the cream of competitive

skill, though enthusiasts have been known in the past to enter at Wimbledon and elsewhere for the sole purpose of securing a seat in the competitors' stand. Behind the array of tournament players is a much larger army of club and private court players, and behind these again an increasing number of citizens who use the courts in public parks and open spaces. The great expansion in all directions, as manufacturers of lawn tennis goods will testify, is of comparatively recent growth. The flowing tide, while always perceptible, after the Dohertys had arrested a decline, took a violent sweep forward when the American servers and volleyers came over in sequence early in the new century, and when these were followed by the Australasians, the French, the Germans, and other Continental envoys, a new scope and vitality were given to the game. I remember thinking the high-water mark had been reached in 1913 when McLoughlin came; the crowds were even larger in 1914, when Brookes came again; and then, after five years' suspension, the game witnessed a boom that few expected and certainly none had catered for.

And yet, was this great appetite for play, visible both among men and women, this passion to see Tilden and Mlle Lenglen perform, very surprising after all? Britain, by instinct a sporting country, had virtually suppressed its sport for four and a half years. What more natural than this pent-up force, at length released, should burst forth with ungovernable vigour? Again, the war's all-powerful magnet, the physical and moral appeal of the national peril, loosened the moorings of humanity; it drew men and women from their homes and made them all adventurers in new lands. Dire perils and discomforts were encountered, but so

too were new interests and new joys. Among units of the Empire and among the races of our Allies there was a daily conversazione—an intermingling of people unparalleled in the world's history. It was inevitable that common bonds of interest, links between one country and another, should be sought for and treasured. Lawn tennis chances to be the most cosmopolitan ball-game in the world. A racket is as good as a passport in almost every civilised foreign city. In the breathing intervals of the war the young soldiers of the great international army, fighting for freedom, often made the game a theme for community and a topic for conversation.

Since there were courts and lawn tennis players in every town, the chief residents rarely failed to know something about the game and its better-known exponents. Three or four incidents stand out in my mind in this connection. While on Foreign Office business in 1917, I found myself hung up in Havre, waiting for a Paris train. I went to the British Consulate knowing that the cheery Consul, Mr. Harry Churchill, would tell me all the local news. Lawn tennis never entered my head, but he said, after a few official preliminaries, "Oh, by the way, we have both R. B. Powell and Mavrogordato quartered in Havre. My daughter is quite excited; she has seen them both play at Wimbledon. Would you like me to see if I can track them on the telephone?" I accepted this kindness immediately, and having taxied out to the Canadian Camp, found R. B., returned to town with him on a lorry, and lunched at the Continental. We repaired to the French club, where Mavrogordato joined us. Two or three months later Powell was killed near Vimy. But for the fact that the British Consul's daughter played lawn tennis, I should never have run across my friends and ex-

changed with the ever-genial "Bobby" memories of our strenuous tour together through South Africa. On an earlier date in the war I was conducting the Hon. F. M. B. Fisher, an ex-Minister of New Zealand, over a colonial hospital near Epsom. The New Zealand convalescents greeted him in one hut with a wild Maori cry; then a lusty voice shouted from a bunk, "How's the great left-hander?" Gobert is reported to have descended from the clouds after some mishap in a French reconnoitring aeroplane, and instead of finding himself, as he half feared, in territory occupied by the enemy, fell among British officers, who instantly recognised him as the French champion and asked him in what training he was keeping for the next Wimbledon! I also recall that Wilding, by sheer accident, spent his last few hours alive in the company of soldiers whom he had often met on court.

But I wander. I set out in this chapter to give some impressions of clubs, courts, tournaments, and players in these isles, reserving foreign experiences for a later section. Yet it is very difficult to localise lawn tennis, to concentrate on one place, or even on one country, without thinking of other places and other countries. The field for memory is so wide; the characters seem to turn up on so many varied occasions and at such different points.

Perhaps I may start with outer London—*i.e.* London outside Wimbledon. In my youth I made the round of Surbiton, Chiswick, Beckenham, and Queen's with great zest, for each was accessible to the charms of the capital in its most attractive month. Over thirty, one took this metropolitan tournamenteering with a little more circumspection, for the programme has often to wait the convenience of City men, and

one is not always certain, especially at Queen's, where the crush is prodigious, whether one will get a match in time to eat a respectable dinner. After forty, with something of an epicure's privilege, items are selected from the fare; the whole feast is too hearty a meal. None the less, with all their drawbacks, these London gatherings, forming a kind of rehearsal for international Wimbledon, have both their joys and dignities.

The beautiful ground of the Surbiton Club at Berrylands has an enviable reputation—for the delectable environment of its courts, especially in mid-May, the date of its open meeting; for the zeal and enterprise of its executive which, with Mr. Alfred Sterry at its head, is ever planning some new development and as surely finding the money to meet the cost; for the full lists and keen competition of its Surrey championship tournament, so long the first grass-court gathering of the year. Here Smith, Ritchie, and Dixon have each been triumphant for three successive years, the last-named by a victory over Wilding; here Brookes fought an anxious five-set final on a rain-sprinkled court against F. G. Lowe, and Patterson, at the opening grass tournament after the war, won his first "turf" singles in England; here, too, more lady ex-champions have competed at any meeting outside Wimbledon, and one of them, Mrs. Sterry, so long maintained her skill as to figure as recently as 1919 in the final of the ladies' doubles.

Nearly twenty years ago I was a member of Chiswick Park—a club with a championship board dating back over a quarter of a century and containing many famous names. Mrs. Lambert Chambers could almost mile-stone her career on the Chiswick courts—she first won the open singles in 1903 and then went on to Wimbledon to win the championship. The Grevilles

have won cups here, so have Mahony and Ritchie. The club, like the courts (which the pavilion seems to shadow at the wrong time), have had their vicissitudes; but Chiswick has never lacked enterprise and support, and has provided the battleground for many spirited county matches.

Beckenham's popularity has never been questioned, in spite of the fact that its tournament courts are borrowed annually from a cricket club and, for that reason, have never been of championship quality. Committees can make and mar tournaments even more than players. The Beckenham executive, for long led and inspired by Mr. C. A. Elgood, are past masters in organisation, controlling it by geniality. They have a pleasant word for everybody—even for the late competitor and the ball-boy who tries to embrace a competitor in the middle of the court. Kent galleries are celebrated for their sporting qualities; this one also for the beauty of its ladies and the daintiness of their attire. Perhaps this is why the male lists always fill so well. It may be that some of the coloured effects do not form the best background for punctilious players. Wasn't it at Beckenham that the late H. S. Barlow asked a lady to lower her red parasol which was in his direct line of vision, and then, since the request was ignored, hit a ball by accident into the offending ornament? But nobody worries unduly about conditions at Beckenham; the play is important but the play is not everything. Barrett has long been a draw here; he could doubtless tell you many stories of thunderstorm matches. Brookes won his first singles in England here, so did Beals Wright, both these oversea players then going on to Wimbledon to win the All Comers. Laurie Doherty and Kingscote have won the Kent Cup outright this century the

latter in his last match having to dispose of a Japanese.

I had a strange umpiring experience at Beckenham. It was in Evelegh's time, probably sixteen years ago. The match was a single between two first-class ladies on one of the gallery courts. In the first set one of the players had reached 5–4. The other declared the score was only 4–3. In vain did I show her the score sheet, plainly marked up with its nine games. She insisted I was wrong. What could I do? I suggested an appeal to the referee, but before any further action could be taken, my disputant had left the court. A few minutes later she was out of the ground. Nor did she ever return, retiring incontinently from both doubles. In my distress and mystification I went to Evelegh; that wise official nodded his uncovered head as I explained what had happened, saying only, "Do not worry at all. You'll be the best of friends afterwards." He was right. I met the lady (whose play I much admired, by the way) at Homburg a few months later. Nothing could exceed her graciousness. She even presented me on court to King Edward, who was taking the cure and had come to see his friend play.

Queen's has pleasant memories, and I shall relate some in another chapter.[1] Its outdoor grass courts have witnessed many memorable contests—notably the stupendous volleying duel between Norman Brookes and Beals Wright in 1905 and the brilliant single between Tilden and Johnston last summer—but neither the light nor the turf at Queen's is of the best, and it has always amazed me that the quality of play has been so high. The Dohertys used to play both publicly and privately here, but they were never very serious supporters of the London championships.

[1] See "Under Cover."

I must not forget that Kenneth Powell won the singles championship in the same summer and on the same turf that he won the hurdles for Cambridge; nor that two other Cambridge men, Wilding and F. G. Lowe, have always shone on these courts. It is a pity Queen's immediately precedes Wimbledon. Competitors at the latter are sorely tempted to practise at headquarters just before the great test; and the conditions are very materially different. Queen's always draws the Americans, however, and I know not how many London players besides. It is a most convenient centre, "tubeable" from any point; and the Queen's bar is the recognised rendezvous for lawn tennis players the world over.

The metropolitan area contains many another well-known club, most of them prosperous, nearly all with a maximum membership, some better known for their spring and autumn seasons. The Gipsy Club at Stamford Hill has admirable courts and sound traditions. It holds a popular open meeting at which the very rare defeat of Roper Barrett in any event provokes something like a sensation. Miss A. M. Morton won the ladies' cup for nine successive years—an absolute record for a lady at a first-class English tournament. Japan at present holds the men's cup—who would have predicted such a development before the war?

What the Gipsy Club is to North London, the South Norwood Club is to South London, though the latter is a much younger institution. I believe the proprietary interest is now vested at Lloyd's, but the life and soul of the annual Norwood tournament is W. C. Bersey, an honorary manager and referee of rare acumen and an insatiable appetite for work. The environment is picturesque and offers the alternatives of golf, boating, and cricket. A German first won

the Norwood Cup; an American now holds it. East Croydon and the Crystal Palace used to have big tournaments; both may do so again. Epsom revived its open meeting last year—an unlucky thirteenth as the weather made it; but no club associated with such keen spirits as George Hampton (brother of the deeply lamented "Jack," whom I partnered in the Surrey Shield) and H. S. Milford will be troubled by trifles like that.

Roehampton is a club with a future rather than a past. Its facilities for grass and hard court play are widely conceived and luxuriously executed, while the material comfort of players is variously catered for. You may dine and dance at Roehampton after you have "slain" your opponent on court. Here the Surrey hard-court championships are now decided; here Gerald Patterson first served his expresses in the open air of England; here a grass-court meeting, the first of a long line to come, was inaugurated last May. Of its hard-court tournament a fortnight earlier, I may relate one amusing incident. I was paired with Mishu, a son of Rumania's former Minister in London. Mishu's forte is singles at which, like Count Salm of Austria, he drives with great power though with little swing—a sort of snappy "punch." In doubles he is inclined to be eccentric, thinking aloud as he hits every ball. In our second-round match one of our opponents lobbed the ball high into a telephone wire crossing the court, some thirty feet up. Gazing aloft, Mishu watched its course deflected. The ball fell into our court. Mishu demanded that the point should be given in our favour, since the wire was not a permanent fixture. Technically, I think, he was right, but the obvious course was a let, which the umpire duly called. More than a little

piqued—or perhaps anxious to amuse the gallery—Mishu began to lift all his returns with the idea of hitting the wire and, I suppose, of demanding a sequence of lets. However, this feat was easier to conceive than to execute. He failed, and our opponents enjoyed a feast of "outs" and "kills." I confess to enjoying the joke as much as the spectators.

The newly christened Country Club at Hendon has the best hard courts of any in London I have sampled, and the appurtenances of the club-house, conceived by Mr. Graham-White, could not be more alluring. It reminded me of the Country Club at Johannesburg, where £100 is put down every Sunday in new golf balls on the first tee-ing ground. The dressing-rooms at Hendon are delightful, the cuisine of the best, and the floor for dancing perfect. A motor-car or aeroplane is useful to reach this very attractive place. Hurlingham is another club which, by its attributes and enterprise, cannot fail to attract players. New hard-court clubs are springing up in all directions. Their virtues are undoubtedly real, both as health resorts and as nurseries for champions. The pioneer hard-court club in London—the Drive at Fulham—has lately resurfaced its five courts, burying its old cement as a foundation for new red rubble. Thus does it make new lamps out of old, and shine even more brightly than it did before the war. But go where you will there is now lawn tennis in London. Several of the parks have hard courts. Soon Battersea may have as many as the Central Park's forty in San Francisco and light them up at dark as 'Frisco does. Commercial houses are laying them down, too; it is money well invested, as managers advise their boards.

Out of London, in all parts of the country there

has been the same expanding spirit, expressed in the season's length, the demand for spring and autumn facilities, the lists at open tournaments, the zeal among juveniles to learn the game. Soon the barriers erected at public schools by prejudiced authority will be broken down and then lawn tennis in England will see a speeding-up of stroke and footwork such as America witnessed a decade ago. I am not one of those who vilify headmasters for delaying the advent of the game; if we needed any proof that cricket is still an unsurpassed training for character the war provided it. Yet it is undeniable that the young men of France, Belgium, and America fought just as keenly and wore just as well on their national games, which include lawn tennis. A new generation of schoolmasters is coming into power. Many will know the real virtues of modern lawn tennis—not least its cosmopolitan vogue and the intercourse it permits with other countries—and will offer it as an alternative recreation. Besides, boys who relish its athletic qualities in the holidays will not be content to forego its pursuit throughout term-time.

I have missed very few Northern tournaments this century—I mean those held alternately at Manchester and Liverpool. They may have lost a little of their lustre since the advent of counter attractions, but the hospitality of Lancashire is a byword and the zeal of its experienced executive an example for every southerner. For several years I have been privileged to join Mr. Joseph Duckworth's house-party at Heaton Mersey. Under his generous roof many a champion has foregathered, many a match been replayed at breakfast or dinner-table, many an oversea youth obtained a first glimpse of English country life. Mr. Duckworth owns a fine billiard-table and keeps a

"break-book," in which every score over fifty is recorded. Norman Brookes has his hundred odd in it, but Parke, Beamish, Doust, R. B. Powell, Mavrogordato, Raymond, and other visitors to this pleasant house have never handled the cue as skilfully as the racket, though some of them have shown latent "potting" talent. Smith, Riseley, and Miss Martin were the outstanding figures at the Northern in my early days. Brookes came, saw and conquered in 1907, though he was defeated in the doubles. Miss May Sutton, attired usefully in a short skirt, won the ladies' singles on something like a mud-heap in 1905. Mrs. Chambers, Mrs. Larcombe, and Mrs. Sterry have all been popular figures. It was at Manchester that Parke beat Wilding, thus adding the then champion to his two other noted victims in one year—Brookes and McLoughlin. Parke, like Smith, always defied Northern conditions; come rain or wind he hit through either with violence and sound aim. Little "Mavro" has also shone here—the best-trained man, touching nothing but water, during the tournament week.

Newcastle I know well and Scarborough even better. The courts for the former's "week" are leased for the occasion and can be a little unreliable; those at Scarborough, especially in recent years, are first class, girding a pavilion now second to none in England. The feature of all these Northern meetings is the local enthusiasm and the bountiful hospitality of those in control. No southerner who goes to Newcastle or Scarborough will ever regret the long journey, and let him not suppose Northumberland and Yorkshire cannot produce players of the toughest fibre. The Edgbaston Club at Birmingham (though the city is invisible from its beautiful ground) is the

bulwark of Midland lawn tennis—a club with the best traditions, and excellent courts sunk on the well principle. Tilden is its present open champion, and told me after our brief match in the third round last July that even Edgbaston in the rain was worth visiting. What a furore the champion created! On the Friday afternoon the grass courts were unplayable, but a red rubble court without gallery accommodation was available. The problem was how to get Tilden, Garland, Beamish, and Winslow on to this substitute surface for a double without bringing the whole of Birmingham with them. The available police were mobilised and informed secretly of the match. The players stole out of the pavilion and crept stealthily to the side court. Then when the crowd came tumbling to the wings, a cordon was kept in position with difficulty. On the following day, when Tilden played Winslow in the final of the singles on the gallery court, the gate was a record. From the umpire's chair I saw on all sides a mass of spectators who followed every stroke with abnormal interest. Not since Brookes came fifteen years earlier had there been a final even approaching this in popular fancy.

Buxton, Leamington, Nottingham, Leicester, Newport—all these inland meetings conjure up memories of spirited fights and genial tournaments. I have even experienced a perfectly fine week at Buxton, and that is almost a unique luxury in August. Here I once played Casdagli in the final of the singles—coming out of court, as I expected, a sadder and wiser man—and then, almost immediately, going back for what proved to be a terrific mixed final in which Casdagli partnered Mrs. Sterry and I Miss Garfit. Our opponents got home at something like 13–11 in the third set. Personally I got home to my Surrey village wet

to the skin at 1.30 the following morning. In my precipitate youth I had travelled back to London with Evelegh, dropped him at Wimbledon station on our midnight train out from Waterloo, and then passed my station in profound slumber. A violent thunderstorm was brewing when I turned out at cabless Leatherhead. It broke over me on my weary trudge across country.

Both Leamington and Newport are heat-inviting meetings; physical hardihood is required to survive them. Smith used to play well at Newport, as Boucher, another Gloucestershire baseliner, did at Leamington. E. R. Allen also had his great day at the latter, as he did elsewhere. The complete withdrawal of the famous twins from tournament play is both a tragedy and a mystery. They still make an annual pilgrimage to Cambridge to encourage the undergraduates, but their exercise is now confined to slow cycling—and not in parallel formation. Bless their gentle hearts and whimsical ways! Their duality was not confined to looks and habits; it governed their thoughts. I remember once walking towards Beachy Head with my wife. We met C. G. with his white trousers and crooked stick. "Where are you staying?" I inquired. "At the —— (naming an hotel). So many flies! So many flies." I asked where E. R. was. "Oh, he's training for the singles," was the reply, "and has gone to the top of Beachy Head. You will meet him coming back." We did, and I asked innocently, "Where are you staying?" "At the ——," he answered at once. "So many flies! So many flies!" As players of the older English school they were sound. To-day, even at their best, I doubt whether they would quite respond to the greater speed. As humorists, with a spontaneous, 'bus-

driver's wit, they were unrivalled, both on the court and off it.

Seaside tournaments are, perhaps luckily, never quite so serious as those inland. The great majority are holiday meetings, with the business man free from his fetters—lighter in heart and clearer in eye in consequence. Eastbourne is the largest and chief of these gatherings—the festive finale of the grass season, admirably equipped and controlled. Mr. Edgar Allan Brown and the Devonshire Park directorate have done much for lawn tennis; they have given more than they have received. Several war charities, notably the Kitchener National Fund, benefited by their generosity during the war. On a fine September morning, the sun driving the gentle mist over the Downs, no ground is so alluring as Devonshire Park; veteran meets veteran and exchanges travel or (as last year) fighting notes; the future champion spreads his or her wings in the juvenile events; current form is crystallised in the South of England Championships.

The Brighton meeting is nearly as big—held at the County Cricket Ground at Hove on which, in some years, it would not be impossible to sail a yacht in the passing breeze. Here Mr. Lionel King is the presiding spirit, an expert at organisation and a ripe student of the game's lore. Most of the great players have gone into court at Brighton, for long one of Evelegh's meetings, now refereed by my friend, Frank Burrow. The mordant humour of W. V. Eaves has enlivened the gallery here, as elsewhere. Drawn to meet Pim in the first round of the singles, the "Doctor" was bustled into court on the morning of the third day with "a train eye" and slightly revolting temper. Pim walked away with the first set. Eaves was making some headway in the second when his

opponent hit a ball on to a newly laid turf, a false bound resulting. It was a critical point, and Pim was profuse in his apologies. "Don't mention it, my dear fellow," said Eaves in one of his audible asides; "some dog's grave, I suppose." And the committee had been preening themselves on the immaculate surface of their show court!

Kent has now a thriving rota of open meetings; each new tournament, as Margate proved last year, draws a crowded field. The Imperial courts at Hythe have a distinctive charm unrivalled in the whole of England. Whether it is their floral terraces, the invigorating air of the Channel, the golf as a pleasing variant, the engaging American Bar which sweetens victory or dilutes defeat, or the genial company of sportsmen who gather at Hythe, this meeting always makes a strong appeal. Men over forty are buoyed up for great deeds at Hythe. I have seen E. R. Allen, at the age of forty-five, beat two such active runners as Doust and Mavrogordato on the same day. Barrett, only four years short of fifty, won the Imperial Cup outright there in 1919. Gore, another wonderful veteran, has driven with his greatest gusto. Nor do younger arms slacken in power here. Kingscote, Woosnam, Turnbull, Norton, and that tireless Indian policeman, F. R. L. Crawford, have had their share of triumphs.

Neighbouring Folkestone is a little more conventional. Its Pleasure Gardens courts are good and the management efficient; but I confess I have sometimes sighed at Folkestone for a September August. Worthing is rather a hot scramble. Like Wimbledon, the West Worthing Club needs more space for its summer meeting, better dressing facilities for its invaders. But players come back again—and

that is always a recommendation. I had a curious match in the singles here with A. D. Prebble. Neither of us had quite mastered the art of singles play, yet there we were, in a temperature well over 90 degrees Fahr., battling for the first prize. Which doubles volleyer would tire first in the noonday August sun? There was no other problem. Fortunately for me, Prebble put a little more power into his service than I did; he felt the strain sooner and dropped out first.

How an Indian sun can train a man for an arduous battle was shown at Worthing in 1919. Dixon was two sets up and 5–2 against Crawford in the final. The latter held on as if a hangman's rope were awaiting the loser in the dressing-room. Bandaged in arm and leg (for he was a martyr to neuritis), his spectacles soaped and his forehead protected with a kind of turban, Crawford filled the part completely of a wounded gladiator. In the end he won the match, Dixon, after lazily reaching match point some eight or nine times and each time finding Crawford able to get his winner back, retiring at two sets all. I admired Crawford's pluck more than his strokes. He is the kind of earnest player who plots tactical schemes in the dead of night, devours a treatise on technique, and examines the grips of champions with the cunning eye of a connoisseur.

I might expatiate at length on the attractions of the West of England and Island tournaments. The weather in August may make them a trifle somnolent and their holiday vein or a damp surface lower the standard of play, but their lists are usually well filled with a goodly sprinkling of Service competitors. One of the oldest tournaments in the kingdom, Exmouth, is steadily regaining its former glories. Bristol

promises to fill the place of Bath. In the Isle of Wight, Mr. G. C. Drabble, owner of a beautiful private indoor court, is one of many zealous patrons.

I am sometimes asked who I consider the best referee at British tournaments. It is an invidious question, and I should be sorry to have to answer it by naming any single individual. I first began to play under Evelegh, whose methods and personality were peculiarly his own. He was my predecessor as lawn tennis editor of the *Field*; I was a contributor to his department many years ago; I respected him as I cherish his memory now. H. S. Scrivener was another of my early referees, and I consider his knowledge of the game's traditions and lore second to none. An unselfish fellow, he is also painstaking and conscientious, a stickler for the correct spelling of proper names and for initials; gifted, too, with that priceless attribute for executive officers—a sense of humour. A lucid and graceful writer on the game, he has done much both for its progress and its dignity.

Perhaps Frank Burrow is the most systematic of referees. Like Scrivener, he has the legal mind for order and sequence; his methods are a shade brisker than his friend's. His impedimenta, though neatly cased when he sets out for a tournament, takes shape and substance. It consists, roughly, of several enormous sheets of white cardboard, a box of drawing-pins, a formidable case of cigars, a box of matches, sundry coloured pencils, and a trench mackintosh. To these he may yet add a kitchen table, essential for his drawing-pins and not always to be found among local properties. To watch Burrow at work opening a tournament and then conducting it, as the crush and clamour rise to their climax and finally subside into the gentle cooing of the mixed handicap winners as

night is falling on the final day, is to realise the value of the specialist's brain as well as the truth of the scriptural maxim that a soft answer turneth away wrath. Like all true humorists, Frank can appreciate a joke against himself. He will recall with a smile how Eaves took a rise from him at Nottingham. The genial "Doctor" and (I think) Ball-Greene were partners in the doubles. Their opponents (and prospective victims) came to the tent before lunch to inquire when their match (or dispatch) would come on. "At two o'clock," said Burrow, "but I shan't be annoyed if you are a few minutes late, since Eaves is rather prone to extend his lunch interval." Returning to his tent a little before two for the afternoon session, Burrow found Eaves pacing up and down the floor. "Where are our opponents and umpire?" he asked a little fretfully. "I understood we were to play at two sharp." It was 2.15 before the local pair put in an appearance. The "Doctor" had, of course, overheard the conversation before lunch and had immediately seen his chance.

By the way, was it at Nottingham or Leicester that somebody once sent a telegram to George Hillyard on court asking him whether it was usual for the singles posts to remain in position during a double? The umpire had omitted to remove them. And that incident reminds me of another celebrated telegram dispatched to Roper Barrett at Saxmundham. The Allen twins were contemplating Bournemouth as their next port of call, but, having had a strenuous tournament in Suffolk, were hoping that its successor would be comparatively easy. Barrett was sitting between E. R. and C. G. near the referee when the telegraph boy came up. He opened the envelope and read the message aloud: "ROPER BARRETT. Lawn

Tennis Tournament, Saxmundham. Will you partner me Bournemouth?—SMITH." The result was electric. "Roy!" shouted Charlie. "Did you hear? S. H. Smith is going to Bournemouth. Just like our luck!" The joke was maintained for some hours, and then somebody relieved the twins' minds by telling them that Barrett was himself the author of the telegram.

Dudley Larcombe runs many big meetings with ability and tact. A sound organiser, he has learnt the secret of persuading people to do things which their marrow bones prompt them to refuse—*e.g.* playing in the rain on an empty stomach. Faced with a tight problem, he can usually solve it. He is fortunate in possessing a wife whose judgment and discretion, though never exercised in an official capacity at tournaments (for Mrs. Larcombe is a competitor under ordinary jurisdiction), are invaluable. Cyril Marriott is another referee who has won his spurs—a quiet and conscientious M.C.

Before crossing the Channel, I may perhaps refer to the increasing attention now paid to tournaments by the Press. Twenty years ago the daily newspapers gave scant notice to an important meeting, and even well into the present century it was considered conventional in many quarters of Fleet Street to be satirical at the expense of the game. Well, all that has now gone. The journalistic instinct appreciates the fact that lawn tennis by its cosmopolitan vogue, its social attributes, its spectacular virtues, and its ability to provide a "fight to a finish" is an admirable story-maker. Kings play and watch it with their subjects; Cabinet Ministers use it as a never-failing tonic; half Debrett have their private courts; Carpentier says of his little daughter, born last year, "We cannot make her a boxer, so she shall be a

tennis champion. Disparagement has given place to advertisement. Now *Punch* and Tom Webster are turned on. A cable line is run into the Press box at Wimbledon. Tilden is interviewed on the landing-stage at Liverpool, and the length of Mlle Lenglen's skirt is a matter of public concern!

There are several shrewd and piquant writers discoursing on lawn tennis in the daily and weekly Press. I have mentioned H. S. Scrivener. No one can read E. E. Mavrogordato (unrelated to T. M., by the way) in *The Times* without appreciating his talent for apt allusion and his observant eye for the point that matters. That versatile scholar, A. E. Crawley, can never be dull; as a critic he shows great discernment, as an antiquarian of ball games he is an acknowledged expert. Eustace White is a careful, forceful writer with a player's knowledge. His didactic matter is sound. H. R. McDonald divides his allegiance with football and cricket. He was quick to see the sporting potentialities of lawn tennis, and writes vividly for the popular public. So does H. L. Bourke, a most hard-working journalist. Among the newer writers are Hamilton Price, a player and referee, and S. Powell Blackmore, an incisive critic. The great lawn tennis artist has yet to reveal himself in England. French and American cartoonists are some distance ahead, both in accuracy and humour, though our popular artists, without inside knowledge of the game, use lawn tennis as a theme with sprightly effect. The sketches of my friends, Charles Ambrose and H. F. Crowther-Smith, are, of course, in a more serious vein and reflect an intimate knowledge of their subject. The writers and artists I have mentioned and several others have helped by their pens and pencils to increase the scope and vitality of lawn tennis.

CHAPTER IV

PLACES AND PLAYERS ON THE CONTINENT

A LITTLE more than a decade ago the Continent was the happy hunting-ground for the British tourist. The experienced invader from these shores might be repulsed by some sturdy defender in France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Holland, Spain, or Switzerland, but as a rule he got through comfortably to the prize round and considered himself unlucky if he was not a successful finalist. Those triumphant days have departed and are never likely to return. The seed sown by British travellers has yielded a rich harvest. The ripe corn now competes with increasing confidence against the English native product. Sometimes, as in the case of Gobert on covered courts, the superiority is unquestioned. Truly the one-time poacher has had to turn gamekeeper and be thankful if he can retain part of his preserves. Sometimes I hear this *dénouement* lamented. Regarded broadly, the growth and development of Continental talent is an object for British pride, a tribute to our missionary zeal, an even greater tribute to the inherent virtues of lawn tennis. I would prefer to see an English champion crowned at Wimbledon, but I would sooner see an oversea player triumphant in a cosmopolitan field than an Englishman victorious in a purely domestic field. Nothing has done more to develop lawn tennis at home than its extension abroad.

Nothing can check a further growth except a curtailment of international competition.

France was the second country after America to follow our lead. Paris has several excellent covered courts—more than London, though not as many as Stockholm—and outside these and throughout the country, a feature of every town, an ever-increasing number of splendid hard courts. Some of those in the northern provinces—those of the Lille Club, for example—suffered at the hands of the German invader, but they have since been reconstructed. Along the French coast, at places like Le Touquet, Boulogne, Dieppe, Dinard, Deauville, and Biarritz, successful tournaments were relaunched in 1919. I have visited most of these popular resorts at one time or another and can testify to their attractions, by no means confined to the lawn tennis courts. It may be delightful to win a match you half expected to lose; your joy is heightened if, when dinner has been consumed on a verandah restaurant to the strains of Strauss, you can stroll through the forest in the cool of an August night to a bijou casino and there—either win the price of your modest repast or see other people juggle with their superfluous wealth. My advice to the home-bored tournamenteer is to go to Le Touquet for a week, and to take a bag of golf-clubs as well as a case of rackets.

Two popular figures at Dinard—Eaves and R. B. Powell—were victims, the former after the Armistice, of the war. Eaves was the cup-holder for seven successive years—a skilful, if perspiring, champion. Nor was he an unsuccessful punter at the tables, having acquired the secret of playing one game late and the other early, and both well. I remember the "Doctor" once piloting a fair partner through a

couple of rounds of the mixed handicap, and then when they came to the third round, on which he had a tempting shade of odds, suggesting tactfully that she should take a seat after returning the service and permit him to win the rally off his own racket. By this happy device both the match and the wager were secured.

Dieppe conjures up to my mind the first visit of a celebrated English player for whose modest purse the referee had made special arrangements at one of the big hotels. He was to pay his own footing, of course, but the pension was low and inclusive. The English international arrived at the dinner hour and, ravenous after his sea passage, partook freely of the luscious dishes offered him in rotation. Preening himself on his sound judgment in coming to Dieppe, he was rising from the table when the *maître d'hôtel* presented him with a little bill of fifty-two francs (pre-war rate of exchange). Expostulating, the visitor discovered, to his dismay, that he had been dining *à la carte*. At this rate the week would cost him thirty pounds. However, the referee put the matter right, and the international's nerves were steadied so that subsequently he won two prizes.

Wilding and Gobert have both been winners of the Deauville Cup. The former was always at his best on the hard courts around the French coast; on the Riviera in his later years he was never once beaten in a single. An islander by birth, he was unquestionably braced by a girding sea, though he was not a good sailor. It was at Deauville, after Wilding had figuratively wiped the court with the Continental cracks, that one or two doubting Wimbledonians, otherwise sound judges, who had not previously seen the champion play on the Continent, released

their enthusiasm and acknowledged his sterling quality.

England played her first Davis Cup match on hard courts at Deauville. The experiment was eminently successful, for France, with Gobert and Laurentz to represent her, was beaten by the odd match in five. This contest will linger in my memory for several reasons. The *mise en scène* was remarkable, for the court was laid down within a catapult-shot of the sea and within earshot of the gay carnival which graces the foreshore at the height of the season. Cavalry officers were engaged in a horse-jumping competition next door; aeroplanes gurgled overhead; all the fun of the fashionable fair was loose, and I remember remarking to Roper Barrett, the British captain, that a bomb ought to have burst over the court when he had sent up one of his highest lobs. Amid these conditions, and with a wind added, the double was played. The French took the first fourteen games. My task as umpire promised to be the shortest on record, when Barrett and Turnbull made a desperate stand and, by judicious tossing, took the third set into twenty-two games.

France was in a winning position when the third day's play opened. A victory in either single took them home, and since Gobert had already beaten Davson and had played with supreme steadiness in the doubles, he was expected to defeat Kingscote. As it happened, a very little would have turned the first match between Davson and Laurentz. Expecting to win with something in hand, the Englishman had to struggle hard right up to the end of the fourth set. At times Laurentz volleyed with dazzling brilliancy, especially on the forehand when Davson tried to cross him from the right-hand court. Luckily Davson had

brought over a good supply of lobs from Queen's ; they helped more than anything else to drain Laurentz's stamina. Kingscote's defeat of Gobert in three sets was a surprise to all who did not calculate on the temperamental advantage of the British soldier and on his wisdom in not watching the previous match. Gobert amused himself by taking snapshots of Davson *v.* Laurentz, but as this tie lengthened and his own receded, I could not help noticing that the suspense was affecting him. Moreover, he was hampered in movement a little by the soft surface ; he was a second late in striding over to protect his wings. Kingscote was passing him with beautiful precision, especially with that very difficult shot, the backhand down the line. Never did player answer his country's call more confidently nor with greater success. Incidentally the victory meant that Major and Mrs. Kingscote would make a wedding trip to Australia.

French zest is unquenchable and the foundation of a hard-court Wimbledon at St. Cloud in 1912 was a monument to the progressive spirit animating France. The centre court at the Stade Français is a model, almost a slavish model, of our own centre court. The stands, if roofless and less solidly constructed, are arranged the same way and are nearly as capacious ; the run-back and side-run are as extensive ; the scoring-board, though a little smaller, is precisely similar ; only the surface of the court, khaki in colour and baked sand in substance, is different. I confess that the yellowy brown colour, so baneful to the eyes in the strong glare of the midsummer sun, draws my preference instinctively to the green turf of Wimbledon, so placid to look upon, a cushion for the feet compared with this rock-like plane. But probably the hard court at St. Cloud more nearly approaches the future

standardised court for the whole world than the centre court at Wimbledon. Turf for lawn tennis is not to be found in Africa or on the Continent. It is something of a luxury in India, and can crumble badly under the heat in Australia. Even where turf is more general the standard of Wimbledon is rarely, if ever, reached. For perfect lawn tennis I prefer Wimbledon on a sunless day, but I would sooner play on a hard non-turf surface than on the majority of grass courts in England.

Outside the chief court at St. Cloud, uncomfortably crowded on championship Sunday, the accommodation for spectators is on a generous scale—in marked contrast to the narrow alleys at the present Wimbledon. The French organisers have acres of beautiful parkland on which to distribute their crowds after a big match. Tea under the trees makes a delightful setting. The pavilion is 300 yards or so from the centre court, reached by sylvan glades. Its catering and dressing accommodation surpasses Wimbledon; indeed, any other tournament on the Continent. The task of the *commissionaire générale* is far from easy, and M. Joannis, the first to fill the post, deserves high praise for his tact and initiative. Day after day he had to handle large and emotional crowds, to feed them, to provide them with good matches, and then to arrange their transport home. That an English referee should be employed—my friend, George Simond—is a graceful tribute on the part of the French to our traditions and *savoir-faire*. I shall have something more to say about "G. M." later. He has a unique experience of Continental conditions, and his influence with players of all nationalities is the growth of many years' confidence in his absolute fairness and good sense.

Some of the glamour and clamour of the prize ring are associated with the finals at St. Cloud. The crowd

can be almost sentimental in its emotion. I remember Mlle Lenglen, then a child of fifteen, winning the ladies' championship in 1914. She followed a German champion, and perhaps that consideration may have added to the warmth—the almost ecstatic warmth—of the demonstration. Men and women kissed her; an excited patron offered a stupendous sum for her racket; the child-wonder of France arrived in the capital on that day.

Then I think of the men's final a year earlier when Gobert, having beaten Froitzheim comfortably in the semi-final, met Wilding, a little shaken by a five-set match with Decugis, in the final. It was a terribly hot afternoon in late May. Paris was like a furnace, and even at leafy St. Cloud one felt uncomfortably warm. Gobert's initial failure was greeted with groans. The fierce sun, beating on an uncovered head, seemed to unnerve the Frenchman, and for some time his ground strokes, especially his forehand drive, went astray. Wilding, with cool brain and sound defence, won the first two sets at 6–3. Then Gobert wisely draped his head in a bathing-cap dipped in water. Almost instantly he improved, and, winning Wilding's service for the first time, went ahead brilliantly. His volleying was audacious, but he scored most of his aces with a backhand drive down Wilding's forehand line, frequently deceiving him with its pace and direction. This streak of irresistibility was greeted with wild acclamation by the crowd. The officials did their best to calm the excitement. Conscious of its effect on the crisis of a long rally, they hissed their disapproval; but as soon as one burst of applause stopped, another began. Even the linesmen betrayed their nationality, gesticulating to friends in the tribunes when Gobert was reducing the big lead against him. Nearly every stroke

seemed to be snapshotted from the galleries by one or other of the private photographers. The cinema operator was busy. Yet if the crowd was too articulate, its impartiality was never in question. Wilding's cool and judicious defence, no less than Gobert's inspired attack, drew its cheers. Paris had learned something of the game's finer shades. It had realised that matches are won as much with the head as with the hand.

Other vivid scenes at St. Cloud crowd the mind. Froitzheim's victory with less opposition in 1912, when the competition was first launched; the portent of the coming storm, soon to threaten the very vitals of Paris, when the German champion and his compatriots failed to follow their entries which had come in May 1914—even their hotel rooms had been booked; the German victory in the doubles in 1913, when R. Kleinschroth and Baron von Bissing (a nephew of the notorious Governor of Brussels), having beaten the Austrians, Kinzl and von Wesseley, actually defeated Wilding and Froitzheim in the final. At least four couples were superior to this German pair, but luck favoured them, for Decugis and Germot, having put out Rahe and the younger Kleinschroth, were required to tackle Wilding and Froitzheim on the same day, and, though a better balanced couple and more aggressive, lost the fifth set by a ball's breadth.

Then there was the superlative play of Laurentz last year in three finals, all of which he won—he defeated Gobert in the singles for the first time since the war; the advent of Shimidzu, the Japanese, in Europe, the discovery of Alonso, the present Spanish champion, and of young Blackbeard, of South Africa, who must assuredly go much further. Though the

Stade Français is modelled on Wimbledon, its atmosphere is quite different—less solemn and unquestionably more buoyant. If good Americans are supposed to go to Paris when they die, the spirits of the best Americans would surely select Paris in May. Those that are absolutely blameless might choose the motor run through the Bois and on to St. Cloud.

I am reserving some recollections of the French and Italian Riviera for the next chapter, and a brief record of two visits to Sweden will be found in "Under Cover." My experience of lawn tennis in Spain is confined to Barcelona; the attractions of San Sebastian and Madrid are in prospect. Wilding was my companion and doubles partner in Barcelona; we went on one year from Cannes, importing nothing but Wilding's growing reputation. The Spaniards at that time had more enthusiasm than experience, and we managed to "sweep the board," the Civil Governor of the city presenting us with gold-handled walking-sticks for winning the handicap doubles from owe forty. Wilding promptly lost this ornamental emblem of fame; mine is waiting the proper ceremonial occasion. I recall that we were met on arrival in Barcelona by the secretary of the tournament, given a brief interval for shaving and breakfast, and then summoned to the ground; that on arrival we found deserted courts, learning later that, in deference to the Spanish temperament, the local custom was to fix matches at least an hour before they were expected to begin. Here, as elsewhere abroad, the hospitality was overwhelming, scarcely conducive to the best training.

The amazing recovery of Belgium after her terrible tribulations is extended to her national games. Soon after the Armistice, lawn tennis began a new lease of

life at Brussels, and even in the gun-ravaged cities of Ostend and Antwerp it quickly took root again. Of course the evolution of new talent, as in England, has been arrested; neutral Holland had an advantage in this respect, revealed at Arnheim last year when the Dutchmen beat South Africa in the Davis Cup, and a young champion, Diermerkool, came to the front as an international. But it can only be a year or two before Belgium matures players of real distinction. Her capacity for Phœnix-like organisation was shown at the recent Olympic Games, a remarkable post-war reunion of athletes. The weather was unkind to the Olympic tournament, and the absence of the Americans and of Gobert, Patterson, and Kingscote restricted the representative quality of the lists. But I witnessed some very spirited lawn tennis on the Beerschot courts on this occasion, notably the final of the singles in which Louis Raymond, of South Africa, to everybody's surprise, defeated Kumagae, the brilliant Japanese, both men driving terrifically with their left arms. Max Woosnam and Turnbull brought honour to England by winning the doubles, while the large gallery enjoyed the rare distinction of witnessing a match in which Mlle Lenglen was on the losing side. This was in the semi-final of the ladies' doubles in which Mrs. McNair and Miss K. McKane opposed the champion and Mlle D'Ayen, and just beat them after Mlle Lenglen, supporting a partner several classes behind her, had made a desperate effort to turn the tide.

At this meeting, too, I saw a match which, played in three sections, divided by a night and subsequently by a summary withdrawal of the ball-boys for a self-appointed luncheon interval, lasted five hours and three-quarters. The winner was Gordon Lowe and

the loser Zerlendi of Greece. This is certainly an Olympic record, and would be an absolute match record if the war had not postponed a certain club match in England for nearly five years, this contest starting in 1914 and ending in 1919. My friend Chevalier Paul de Borman was referee at the Olympic tournament and deserves credit for conducting a difficult gathering under trying circumstances. One of his minor trials was the close proximity of the Stadium. Wild shouts from the tribunes punctuated almost every stroke; but this defect was unavoidable. What hampered him more was the discovery that, at the appointed hour for their match, some of the competitors had gone to the Stadium and there lost all count of time in the ecstatic fervour of cheering their countrymen on the track.

Of Germany and Austria before the war I have written in another volume,[1] but I may be permitted to say that the tournaments of Homburg and Baden-Baden, when managed by Englishmen, had very great attractions, no less on the social than on the lawn tennis side. Mr. Charles Voigt, the pioneer of international lawn tennis on the Continent, was a splendid organiser when I first went over. I recall two matches at Homburg in which Wilding, a somewhat under-trained finalist, was on the losing side against Froitzheim, the German champion sliding into position to make his fine passing drives with great skill. After one of these contests both Wilding and Froitzheim went on to Baden—a delectable spot in August for any tournament—and the betting on this return encounter assumed exciting proportions. Luckily for British money, the New Zealander went into strict training, as he so easily could, and the result was never in doubt,

[1] *The Complete Lawn Tennis Player* (Methuen).

though Froitzheim, to give him his due, always had more natural genius than the man who usually beat him. It was at Baden that Wilding and I paired in the doubles and won them at the expense of Froitzheim and Baron von Lersner, the German Peace delegate in Paris. I remember nothing extraordinary about this final except that some of von Lersner's relations formed themselves into a kind of claque and seemed especially dispirited when we were drawing near to victory. I met the leading German players in several countries beside their own, in England, France, and America, and I never found them anything but good sportsmen, particularly abroad. In method, they were more like ourselves at our best than like the French or the Australians. That is to say, they were all-court players, without extremes in service or volleying and with a correct idea of angles for ground stroke play. Their hard-court training naturally made them more severe hitters than the English. Temperamentally (except Froitzheim) they did not possess our persistence or sang-froid. Winning, they could play brilliantly; once collared by a superior tactician, they would crumble badly. But watching them for a set or even two sets at Wimbledon or in Paris the ordinary spectator would be greatly impressed with their merits, of which speed of foot and of drive were the chief attributes.

Austria-Hungary used to run, and may run again, several large tournaments, beautifully staged. Vienna, Marienbad, Kissingen, Budapest, not only had most attractive courts but equally attractive players. Their best, Kinzl, von Wesseley, Count Salm and others, have visited England. Count Salm was a remarkable personality, as strong as an ox, Mishu-like in his heterodox driving, at all times a whimsical character.

He did not appreciate defeat, and after I had once gained a lucky victory over him in singles at Mentone he smashed three rackets across his knee as if they were light canes. At St. Cloud, when playing Gordon Lowe on the eve of the war—a nightmare match which the Austrian won—he amused himself and the large crowd by squirting soda water over his head from a syphon as he crossed over. On his visit to Wimbledon in 1913, Salm was more placid, but the passing trains drew from him in the midst of a rally the exclamation, "Every locomotive in the world is letting off steam outside this court." I confess to a former liking for this spirited individual; he could be so audaciously quaint.

The Italians, like the Spaniards, are making progress, and with it some potential champions. The country has many charming hard courts, notably those at Rome. Switzerland has attracted the British player ever since the Continent offered facilities for play. There is no resort without its open tournament, staged as a rule amid delightful scenery. At least two famous internationals, Kingscote and R. N. Williams, made Switzerland their lawn tennis nursery. They practised frequently together at Geneva, and the close observer will see several points of resemblance both in their style and methods. As proof of Swiss enterprise the covered courts at St. Moritz, Geneva, and Lausanne may be mentioned. That at St. Moritz is illuminated for evening play; in this matter of artificial lighting, by the way, Switzerland and Sweden are much ahead of this country.

CHAPTER V

RIVIERA RECOLLECTIONS

IT is getting on for twenty years since I first took a racket to the Riviera. From that day, with the exception of the war interregnum, I have not missed a season, so I suppose I may speak of its distinctive charms with some of the experience of an habitué. Lawn tennis in the South of France is now almost indigenous to the soil, that fine, red, adiactinic earth which, excavated from the Esterelles, rolls out, when properly laid down, into a perfect playing surface. Its season, compared with California or Rhodesia, may be comparatively brief ; for the heat is too enervating for anything but an evening knock in the early summer, while rains are a deterrent later. Yet, from mid-November to mid-April, and even into May, in those months when England and Northern Europe can be climatically unkind, the Riviera offers sun-dowered courts for the physical and mental recuperation of mankind.

Prosperous as the game had become in the South before the war, though not without its vicissitudes, its speedy revival after the Armistice and its development since are nothing short of remarkable—an extension all the more noteworthy when the withdrawal of supporters from the Central Powers is considered. I suppose the main reason is the fact that, just prior to 1914, the boy and girlhood of France had begun to accept the pastime as a convention of social life, and

the youth of the country deemed it expedient to celebrate the preservation of national liberty and its own freedom from military shackles by an extension of *la vie au grand d'air*. Thus many of the boys and girls whom I saw initiated into the mysteries of the game at St. Cloud in '12 and '13 have now developed into zealous players anxious to exploit their maturing skill in that department of their country which offers winter facilities. Further, the great influx of American visitors—whole families with racket cases in their baggage now follow in the footsteps of Dr. James Dwight, a pioneer with the Renshaw twins at Cannes in the mid-eighties—has more than filled the void left by the Germans and the Austrians. The English and Scots come much more freely than they used to do, probably propelled by the wider distribution of wealth; many Belgians evicted summarily from their own land in 1914 became grateful exiles on the Riviera, and now return to renew their friendship; snow-bound Scandinavia sends players to a snowless coast; a goodly number of Russians have fled from the disruptive chaos of their own country; Italians and Spaniards are drifting to places where their increasing talent can be measured and approved.

When I first went out the centre of lawn tennis gravity was at the Place Mozart, Nice, the site of the Nice Club. That institution still flourishes and has lately gained a new distinction by the appointment of M. Charles Lenglen, father of the incomparable Suzanne, as hon. secretary, his daughter practising almost daily on the club courts—invariably against men, let me add. But because of its situation in the heart of a city, and consequently of its restricted space, the Nice Club, while retaining its traditions and the South of France championships, has shed

some of its prestige both east and west, in the direction of Cannes and Monte Carlo. New and spacious courts for the Nice Club are planned, bringing Nice into line with other Riviera resorts. Cannes has now eight or nine open tournaments to the two or three at Nice, while the Monte Carlo meeting at the end of February, always a cosmopolitan gathering with an attractive prize-list, now ranks as the *pièce de résistance* of the season.

This last fact is rather curious when it is realised that the courts and conditions at Monte Carlo, up to 1920 at any rate, were not so conducive to high-standard play as those at Cannes or Mentone. Even before the arena was moved down to the Condamine, within a few yards of the drying-beach of the Monaco laundresses, the two courts which Mr. Charles Voigt controlled behind the Hôtel de Paris scarcely possessed championship attributes, though they were infinitely to be preferred to the green-lacking, hotel-girded courts near the harbour. A sybaritic hotel now covers the original site, but memories of their fame will survive and their legends will doubtless multiply.

Their opening was not without its amusing incident. A quartette of giants were invited over from Cannes to give an exhibition of their championship skill before a crowd of patrons and patronesses gaily caparisoned. The players arrived by train and were met at the station by a solemn, silk-hatted deputation of Casino directors, headed by M. Blanc. Conducted to a sumptuous luncheon-table and there succumbing to the florid oratory of the toast-givers, the visitors so far went out of strict training that when the hour for their match arrived they were more disposed for leap-frog than for lawn tennis. If I am not mistaken, the genial Dr. Eaves opened the exhibition match by

projecting a ball which fell into the *Tir de Pigeon*, a considerable distance outside the court; his next attempt, also a fault, touched the ground in front of his own service line. For the first two games no rally of any serious consequence could be constructed, and the umpire had some difficulty in securing the interchange of sides every alternate game. Nobody, of course, in the least minded these pleasantries, since most of the spectators had been fellow-guests at the luncheon, and probably few of them smiled when the next day they read in the local press a vivid description of the champions' "unparalleled skill."

Soon afterwards, in the late nineties, the Dohertys began to take pride of place on the Riviera, and for a decade they were nearly as invincible on its hard, sun-dowered courts as elsewhere. At Monte Carlo they were ever a powerful magnet, with a following nearly as great as the modern Lenglen, and as popular and as unassuming off the court as on it. From 1897 to 1906 without a break one or other of the brothers won the Monte Carlo singles. Sometimes they both reached the final and played a fraternal match or half a match to please the gallery; they never would fight out, either here or in England, a blood battle between themselves. Was it surprising? They played solely for the love of the game; personal rivalry was unknown to them. But they did not always win their laurels easily, nor were they immune from defeat.

The joint entry of the Dohertys and Smith and Riseley made the Monte Carlo meeting of 1903 especially memorable. The Gloucestershire pair, then the doubles champions, had lowered the colours of the Dohertys at Wimbledon the previous summer, and a return match was eagerly anticipated. As the elder

Doherty was paired with G. W. Hillyard in the open doubles, it seemed impossible to realise this expectation. But the resourceful Voigt was equal to the occasion. He induced the brothers to enter as a pair for the handicap doubles, roped in Smith and Riseley as well, put both combinations on the same mark, and then drew them to meet in the second round. So the decks were cleared for action. I doubt whether the Dohertys, though out for victory and carrying the stakes of their supporters, were quite so keen or so well conditioned as their rivals. Be that as it may, they found Riseley at his best and Smith in brilliant driving fettle, and were beaten after a close first set (11–9, 6–3, 6–4). The match was made a "five-setter" by arrangement. Each side won five successive games in the opening set; then the loss of the service exercised its normal influence on the match.

At the same meeting the units of these pairs met in singles. Smith's footwork, never so fluent as H. L.'s, was impeded on the sand surface; he could not run round his backhand as he could on grass. Playing chiefly from the back of the court, Laurie beat Smith 6–2, 6–2. Then he scratched to his brother, the holder, in the semi-final, and R. F. met Riseley, who had defeated Ritchie with something in hand. A great match followed. Riseley, reconciling his game to hard-court conditions, never of the best, played in a manner that excited the enthusiasm of the crowd. In the third game of the first set, however, he had the misfortune to slip and cut his knee—an incident which delayed his challenge. R. F. Doherty was a set up and 5–3 when Riseley fought with great skill and courage. He squared the set, and level pegging was registered until "fourteen-all," when Reggie forfeited his service and his opponent went out

at 16–14. Then Riseley retired, with both fairly well spent.

A little later in the same season S. H. Smith, now more acclimatised, met H. L. in the final of the South of France championship at Nice. A terrific five-set match resulted, Smith winning the first two sets, the holder the next three. Laurie carried out his usual plan when engaging Smith ; he ran " a hundred miles " from corner to corner, chasing the bombarding drives of his antagonist and waiting patiently for the chance to come up on something softer from Smith's backhand. It was a scheme of tactics the Americans who met Smith at Wimbledon could never assimilate, and doubtless did not possess the ground strokes to exploit.

After he resigned the championship in 1906, H. L. was twice defeated in singles at Monte Carlo—once in 1907 by his countryman, Ritchie, and again in 1909 by F. B. Alexander, the American international. I witnessed both these memorable matches, and, while giving every credit to both victors, I do not think it can be said honestly that the hitherto undefeated ex-champion was at his best or brightest. First-class lawn tennis is an exacting taskmaster ; no man can return to it and regain his touch and temper without assiduous practice. After-war results in 1919 proved that beyond question. H. L. had not dropped his racket, and had been playing doubles with most of his old skill intact ; but he had begun to woo and win another and very different love—the royal and ancient game of golf—and some of the sting, as well as some of the zest, had departed from his game. However, Ritchie's victory in the final of 1907, gained in three long vantage sets (8–6, 7–5, 8–6), caused quite a flutter throughout the lawn tennis dovecots, both in

Europe and in America. Ritchie had defeated Laurie under cover at Queen's three years earlier, when Laurie was certainly in better trim, so that his second victory cannot be called a fluke. On the other hand, Ritchie had been H. L.'s victim on numerous occasions, on grass, wood, and sand, and I think my old friend would be the first to admit that he found his opponent below his best form on the Condamine court. As at Queen's in the autumn of 1904, Ritchie attacked at close quarters at every opportunity. Volleying is never so profitable as when the other man may not be disposed physically to counter-volley. There was just the extra push in Ritchie's attack to win the fateful points of long vantage games; just enough disconcerting sun-rays to embarrass a player short of Riviera practice.

H. L.'s two defeats on the same court in 1909 were due to the same causes, exercised perhaps a little more acutely—for he "came back" at this meeting after two years' comparative retirement. I was interested in both results—in one as a supporter off the court, in the other as an opponent on the court. Before we went over to Monte, Laurie and I had been having some practice singles together at the Beau Site, Cannes—fairly level matches, with H. L. conceding 15. His strokes were as facile as ever, but they seemed to have lost some of their snap, while he tired quickly. We chanced to meet in the third round of the Monte Carlo Cup, and to my great surprise, volleying all the time, I took the second set.

In the next round, the semi-final, he had quite a narrow squeak against Ritchie, who was bustling throughout, and then in the final met Alexander, returning home via Europe after a Davis Cup pilgrimage in Australia. With his break service, fast dipping forehand drive and check volleys, executed at

unfamiliar angles, Alexander had been shaking up all the members of the Nice Club, and had won the club championship before coming on to Monte for the open meeting. Yet, aggressive player as he was, his chances against H. L., who had never once fallen to an American racket, were not considered rosy. Nevertheless, a countryman of the visitor—the late Mr. A. C. Bostwick, a Standard Oil magnate—was so enamoured of Alexander's play that he offered to lay a hundred louis level in his favour. Englishmen took up this challenge readily, and a pool was quickly formed. I remember meeting H. L. in the rooms on the evening before the match, and telling him of Bostwick's confidence. His reply was to hand me ten louis, with the injunction, "You might get that on for me anonymously." Of all players H. L. was the least boastful, and this expression of his assurance did but strengthen my own opinion. Unfortunately, our champion, out of training all through the tournament, came into court a spent warrior. He was beaten in three sets (7–5, 6–4, 6–1). After leading 4–2 in the first set, Alexander's sweater then unremoved, Doherty never seemed able to get his opponent's measure again. The American's sliced service and chopped volleys skewed in the loose sand; he attacked with increasing confidence and raced merrily through the third set. Previous to the final, Laurie and the Countess Schulenburg—a famous and almost invincible pair on the Riviera—had gone down in the mixed doubles to Miss J. Tripp and myself after a very tight finish. I remember that H. L. and the Countess led 5–2 in the final set, and that, mainly as a result of Miss Tripp's Smith-like drives, which appeared to demoralise the German lady at the finish, we took the next five games. In the final we met Ritchie and Miss A. N. G. Greene,

the latter having won the ladies' singles. When we dropped the first set at 6–1, I thought how "flukey" our rather sensational victory in the previous round would appear. This reflection must have steadied my ardour, for we won the second and third sets at 6–3. Both in that year and in 1912 Miss Tripp and I enjoyed an unexpected run of success, in the latter year winning successively at San Remo, Mentone, Nice, and Cannes. We were only defeated in the final at Monte Carlo by Wilding and Frl. Rieck.

Monte Carlo had a new venue for its open tournament this year (1921). The old Condamine courts, lacking almost everything except a history, were replaced by the luxurious La Festa courts, standing high on the mountain-side above the Casino. It was my privilege last January to play in the inauguratory matches, and I can testify to the money, time, and care expended on their equipment. Ground in Monaco is as difficult to find as in the City of London, but the Administration solved the problem by constructing three courts and a club-house on the roof of a huge motor-garage. The surface of the first and the equipment of the second were made as perfect as enterprise would permit. Permanent seating accommodation for six hundred spectators was provided round the first court, and four knock-up courts sandwiched in the limited space. The Director of lawn tennis at Monte Carlo, Mr. Simond, had the satisfaction of controlling in March the largest tournament ever held in Monaco—a meeting at which Mlle Lenglen carried off three challenge cups without the loss of a set. It was a tribute to her genius that when Suzanne was out of court the crowd was comparatively thin; you could not get a seat for love or money when she was playing. Neither the Renshaws

at Wimbledon nor the Dohertys at Homburg proved such a social draw as this young French lady of twenty-one.

During the seven years before the war the outstanding figure was Anthony Wilding, at his best absolutely unbeatable on the Riviera hard courts. The first year that he came out, fresh from Cambridge, H. L. Doherty beat him at Monte Carlo, but he gave an earnest of coming triumphs by taking a love set from the great man. Wilding was then lodging with me at a small and inexpensive hotel near the station—a gay but never riotous youth, eschewing all intoxicants and eating heartily of tangerines at every meal. Defying convention, he would attempt to run the gauntlet of stern officialdom at the Casino by entering in grey "bags" and a Norfolk jacket, for all the world as if he were strolling down Trumpington Street. Challenged by the janitor, who pointed gravely to his belt, hanging loosely down, he removed the offending article and handed it to the official, passing smilingly through the portals before the latter had recovered his composure.

Of all Riviera competitors, Wilding was the fittest and thereby the most confident. On the rare occasions when he indulged, even slightly, in the world's good things, he suffered for his lapse. Thus Ritchie beat him on the Beau Site court in 1907 a week after Wilding had romped through his old opponent at Nice. I remember that Nice tourney well. The brothers Wright, Beals and Irving, were competitors, and Ritchie beat them both in two love sets—a gluttonous performance. If one had not known that both Americans, and Beals especially, were in holiday mood, intent on seeing sights rather than a lawn tennis ball, one might have wondered how Wilding, who took two

love sets from Ritchie in the final, would have defeated the Wrights!

Wilding won both the Nice and the Monte Carlo cups outright. He probably strewed the Riviera courts with more love sets than any other player of any country. Decugis or one of the Germans usually gave him his best game. I recall one final at Monte Carlo (1912) in which Decugis proved quite a thorn in his side, nor were Wilding's chances improved by a nasty fall on the red sand at a critical moment. His playing palm was cut open and the blood streamed down the handle, drops falling on the court. Decugis, who was superstitious, bent down and touched one of those spots when he crossed over, whereupon an avid supporter of the French champion (who was taking a line and ought to have remained silent in his chair) rose excitedly and shouted, "Bravo! Bravo! Decugis wins!" An exhibition of unseemly partisanship which will never leave my memory. Neither the hurt nor the demonstration shook Wilding's determination. I suggested he should leave the court for a moment and wash his hand. He smiled deprecatingly, went on perfectly calmly, and won.

Several exciting and one or two amusing doubles in the South come to mind. I have mentioned the Dohertys against Smith and Riseley at Monte. The brothers were beaten again at Nice in 1908, their first appearance in public since they lost the doubles championship at Wimbledon in 1906, and their last appearance on any public court as a pair. In this year R. F. was little better than a "dug out." The brothers had been playing well against Ball-Greene and Eaves in practice at the Beau Site and with their usual good nature they consented to turn out. I had made a special journey over to Cannes to remind the Dohertys

that a third victory at Nice would give them permanent possession of the doubles cups—a fact neither had remembered. They had won them in 1904 and 1905. People trained and motored from all parts to witness the final between the brothers and Ritchie and Wilding. Eaves was busy behind the scenes with a book, Mr. Vanderbilt, on whose yacht Wilding was staying, having the hardihood to lay as much as two to one on his guest and his partner. These, of course, were not the correct odds, although Wilding and Ritchie then held the doubles championship at Wimbledon.

Vanderbilt won his money. The brothers only won one set in four. R. F. was the weak factor in the combination. He was indisposed, and seemed quite unable to return the service with any force or consistency. H. L. fought gallantly and saved the third set when all looked over ; but the attack remained with the other side. I never saw Wilding and Ritchie in more confident fettle ; they took the fourth set and the match with the loss of only one game—a conspicuous triumph. The Dohertys were not at their best—a long way below it—but the advanced formation of their opponents on this occasion and the success it achieved suggests to my mind now, as it had suggested before, that, given ground-stroke vigour and accuracy (such as the earlier Americans who opposed the Dohertys never possessed), combined with punitive, close-quarter volleying, the Dohertys' volleying position would have proved a material, and probably a fatal, handicap in modern doubles.

The year before, on the same court, H. L., this time paired with Ritchie, had won a remarkable final against Wilding and Decugis, the more fancied couple. The brothers Wright, recovered from their singles lethargy, had defeated Bobbie Powell and myself after we had

been within a stroke of victory, and had then gone down to Wilding and Decugis. Doherty and Ritchie had easily accounted for Gordon Lowe and D. P. Rhodes. Wilding and the French champion opened the final with convincing confidence. They were soon a set up with a good lead in the second. Then the mercury in the Frenchman's system began to wobble; soon it sank right down. The brilliant server and smasher became a double-faulter and a snatcher at lobs; the weakness affected his service returns; from that moment his side was doomed; the English couple took the last two sets at 6–1. Perhaps it was not altogether Max's fault. Wilding was ever a difficult partner to link up with; I knew that by painful personal experience. He needed enormous elbow-room, and somehow his vigorous drives and profound concentration made his partner self-conscious and weaker than usual in his weak spots. Though we won several open doubles together, both at home and abroad, I let him down badly two or three times, notably in the final at Cannes against Mavrogordato and Rahe, and at Mentone against Ritchie and Simond. Tony needed a partner whose play he could respect. Thus he never had a better one than Norman Brookes; the master subdued his personality, I suppose.

The Allen twins were familiar figures on the Riviera courts for many years, as their father, the Rev. H. B. Allen, was before them. Before the Continental school developed speed of attack, they were usually in the running for the chief prizes. If E. R. had his tail up, he could give trouble to any man, even in his later years. It was once my good fortune, in a comparatively weak field (Wilding had been compelled to take to his bed after his Monte Carlo

fall, mentioned previously), to reach the final of the singles at Mentone and there oppose E. R. We played in the morning under a hot sun. I realised that my only possible chance was to bustle the twin at the net and conceivably drain his stamina. E. R. opened with a love set, passing me with supreme confidence; then he must have slacked off, for I took the second set at 6–3. In the third he was on top all the way. C. G. was hovering in the wings, a solicitous and articulate second to his brother, and as we crossed over he declaimed audibly that my number was up and that I might as well retire. I shared his opinion, but with feigned bravado replied, "My dear Charlie, you will have to get another brandy and soda for Roy. I am going to win the fourth set." And win it, by some miracle, I did, after 'vantage games. More refreshment was served out to E. R. by C. G. The carrier was just a little anxious. "Forehand, you fool!" he almost shouted to his brother. But he need not have bothered. To my great surprise, for I had now visions of carrying the fight to its limit, E. R. played with his first set freshness in the final bout. He won a love set. Either he had been reserving himself for the *coup de grâce*, or C. G.'s last concoction had proved more potent than any of the others.

I was concerned in another amusing match at Mentone (delightfully picturesque courts, by the way, self-owned by the club) in 1913, when Count Salm and I partnered Wilding and Robert Kleinschroth in the doubles. The fiery Salm had beaten Kleinschroth in the singles, and the relations between these two, Austrian and German, were a little strained. But I never dreamed, nor did Wilding, that at the critical stage of our double, when each side had won a set,

Kleinschroth and Salm would be in deadly grips in the middle of the court. One or other had said something in German as we crossed over, and the next thing the astonished gallery witnessed was an angry wrestling bout. The eccentric Salm had brought a comb down to the umpire's chair, and I remember Wilding picked it up and started combing the hair of his militant partner. I endeavoured to put my arms round the Count. Eventually they quieted down and the match proceeded, Salm celebrating a pyrrhic victory by some very wild driving. The final was a match full of further extravagances. Rahe and the younger Kleinschroth lost only three games in the first two sets; they did not win a single game in the next two sets; in the fifth set Wilding and Robert Kleinschroth just lost on the post.

Cannes now possesses something like two dozen courts, and with Tom Fleming, Tom Burke, and his sons available as coaches this delectable place is an admirable nursery for the game. By age and tradition the Beau Site must come first. Every champion from Renshaw to Mlle Lenglen has trod its famous orange-grove court. There is even a link between past and present in the person of Napoleon, the Peter Pan ball-boy, who scouted for Lawford and the Renshaws and still scouted up to last year. Going back to the Beau Site after the war I inquired for Napoleon. There was an ominous silence. Nobody had heard of him since he had gone forth as a poilu. It was assumed he was dead. But one fine morning in January, 1920, there crept to the edge of the piazza a little man wearing a growth of beard and a winsome air. It was Napoleon recently demobilised.

Reigning kings and fallen monarchs have played and watched others play at the Beau Site. A list of

its patrons would include not only most of those who have been crowned metaphorically at Wimbledon, but some who have been crowned in actuality at Westminster, Moscow, and Stockholm. The mother of the German ex-Crown Princess used to compete in the mixed doubles, so did the Grand-Duke Michael. The Duke of Cambridge once gave away the prizes, expressing regret that officers of the British Army had not benefited more by the physical training of lawn tennis. King Edward frequently came to see the Dohertys as he did at Homburg. King Gustav of Sweden, an avid devotee, has sampled the first court more than once. Mr. Balfour has played, and not without success, in one of its tournaments. The ana of the Beau Site would almost make an independent chapter. It would have to embrace some mention of the Beau Site fancy-dress balls, its freak matches, its supper-parties, even its billiard contests. No setting for lawn tennis throughout the world is quite so enchanting as the Beau Site garden; certainly no shrubs or flowers have listened to so much political and social gossip.

The Carlton courts, scene of Mlle Lenglen's first victory in open singles on the Riviera—she was then fourteen—are nearer the Casino and the hub of fashion; comparatively new, they have yet to make tradition. The Cannes Club, much improved and extended under Mr. H. E. Atkinson's control, is farther west. I have a grateful memory of the Cannes Club, for, when most of the greater lights had gone home, I nearly won all three open events one year. Its courts are less protected than those at the Beau Site, but there are many more of them, and the appurtenances of the club-house are now first class. Hyères, to the west, and Bordighera and San Remo in

Italy to the east, may be regarded as Riviera outposts. Each has had successful open meetings, that at San Remo decided in a delightfully rural environment—a less strenuous, because smaller, tournament than any on the French coast.

I must not forget to add that Riviera grounds have been augmented by the charming Bristol courts at Beaulieu. Midway on the winding coast between Nice and Monte Carlo, and easily accessible to each by train or motor, Beaulieu is a favoured winter base, offering all the scenic and climatic virtues of the larger resorts without their noise and bustle. The Bristol courts are situated in the gardens of the Hôtel Bristol; they are well sheltered from the wind and have an excellent background. C. H. Ridding, the former Gloucestershire amateur, is the coach.

Before I close these random Riviera recollections a tribute, however broken, must be paid to the labours and influence of George Simond. He has been referee, handicapper, and manager of nearly every open meeting in those parts for many years—years of fluctuating fortune and not without some stress. His conscientious attention to every detail, scrupulous fairness, unfailing tact when handling players of different nationalities and conflicting temperaments, have proved qualities of inestimable advantage to the game and its traditions in the South of France. He has won many a championship in his younger days—one of the safest and headiest partners R. F. Doherty or Wilding ever had. His bridge is as sound as his friendship. Only once or twice have I seen him a little ruffled. That was when the crowd was kept waiting for the arrival of some tardy competitor. I remember once interceding strenuously for Wilding and Ritchie, whom Simond, using his discretionary

powers, had scratched in the doubles at Cannes because Wilding had extended the luncheon interval at some neighbouring villa. I thought, and still think, that there had been some misunderstanding over the hour through a message which had gone astray. Simond stuck to his decision, reluctant as he was to impose it. A committee meeting was called and we decided against G. M., also with the greatest reluctance. But some days after Wilding and Ritchie had won the first prizes, the French governing body, approached by their opponents, debated the matter anew and upheld Simond. He will probably remember the incident, because the same night he won every rubber of bridge against me.

CHAPTER VI

THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA

IT is ten years since I had the privilege to lead an English team through South Africa. Thoughts far removed from lawn tennis have loaded memory's bridge in the interval, but a vivid impression of that most enjoyable of all tours must remain. The mission was not without its rigours. Altogether in four months we travelled twenty thousand miles, spent thirty nights in a railway train, played thirty-one matches, including three "Tests," and negotiated a programme of sight-seeing and hospitality framed on a scale at once generous and exacting. That we maintained an absolutely unbeaten health record and very nearly an unbeaten match record throughout the tour was a source for congratulation. In keeping free from illness of any kind we fared better than English lawn tennis teams which went through South Africa both before and after us. Come to think of it, three of George Hillyard's All England Club four have passed away—R. F. Doherty, W. V. Eaves, and Leonard Escombe. Only the captain remains—a specimen of physical manhood about as hardy and as handsome as you would find in all England. Not that their trip to South Africa hastened the deaths of these three fine players—on the contrary; but I know that they found the tour, as we did, more strenuous than they had anticipated.

Four of my personal friends—Charles Dixon,

Ernest Beamish, Bobbie Powell, and Gordon Lowe—set out with me from Waterloo, to the accompaniment of many good wishes from friends, on a journey which was to extend to the Zambesi River and even beyond it. The members of the team possessed a variety of temperament, as well as of lawn tennis strokes, both factors making for gaiety on and off the court and eliminating any risk of dullness. "C. P.," senior both in age and lawn tennis experience—how he amazed the Natalians and the Transvaalers by his speed of foot and drive, despite his 15½ stone—how heartily he ate, laughed, and sang—the last in bed at night, usually finishing the day with a special turn of his own, known as "Dixon's Midnight Imitation of Mighty Lawn Tennis Players"—a thoroughly dishevelled figure, crowned with a bowler hat, as he crawled out of the train in the morning to shake hands with the spruce Mayor and other local bigwigs who had come to the station to meet us—ever compliant with his captain's suggestions, though he had previously captained a British Davis Cup team in America—never less likely to lose a critical match than when his opponent was within a stroke of winning it—the same keen fighter in broiling sun, hurricane, wind, or threatening storm—"C. P." was in spirit the youngest of the whole team. He lost only one single throughout the tour, and that after an uncomfortable journey in the guard's van, travelling from Pretoria to Johannesburg. Lord Methuen's A.D.C.—we had been the guests of the Commander-in-Chief at Headquarters House—had telegraphed reserving accommodation in the train. By some chance, probably unavoidable, the order miscarried and, the train having her steam up, we hustled into the brake-van and had to stand during the whole journey. It was not a severe penalty,

and none would have given it a further thought had not Dixon, who rather enjoyed mixing himself up in his impedimenta, put down his overcoat on one piece of luggage, his rackets on the floor, and his English mail in the most inconspicuous niche in the compartment. When he alighted irresponsibly at Jo'burg, the visible articles were snatched up and the letters left behind. This incident (as well it might) preyed on his mind ; he lost to F. E. Cockran (who fell in the war) after a three-set match.

We were playing the Qa Kamba Club, an offshoot of the Wanderers, as their name implies—virtually they were the first six in Johannesburg—and I recall that Dixon and I finished our respective singles about the same time. Playing cautiously from the base-line and profiting by my opponent's erratic service, I managed to beat De Villiers in straight sets. This win, as well as Dixon's defeat, were so unexpected that when I met Gordon Lowe, who had just arrived from the hotel for his own match, and told him that honours were easy and he must now put us ahead, his only remark was, " Good old Dickey ! "

Well, as I have said, Dixon was victorious in all his other singles matches. In both his test singles at Johannesburg his adversaries only required a point for victory ; on each occasion his nerve and resource pulled him through. While it might possibly be fatal for Dixon to establish a strong winning lead—he led Larned five-two in the fifth set in the Davis Cup match in New York in 1911 and failed to win another game—he was never " dead " until the last shot was fired. One of his most remarkable recoveries (of which I was an agitated witness, for I had confidently supported his chances to win the event outright) occurred in the Welsh championship at Newport.

S. M. Jacob was something like five-two and 40 love against him in the third set. Dixon got out at 7–5. He did not cut things quite so fine in South Africa, yet he displayed there, as elsewhere, that latent ability for waking up to danger in the nick of time.

Beamish was the philosopher and handyman on the side. To natural chivalry and unselfishness were allied humour responding instinctively to the satire and wit of Shaw and Chesterton. A more attractive, unfidgeting travelling companion it would be impossible to conceive. On court he might not be quite so placid; the artist in him seemed to rebel against any outrage to correct style or even to conventional dress. But off the court, in ship, train, or in bivouac, he was easily the best tempered of the five. Nothing disturbed his serenity. He always saw the lighter side of every solemn picture. I recollect, for example, that when the five of us were out in a couple of canoes on the broad Zambesi, a school of hippopotami, thrusting up their heads out of the river, snorted in rather alarming proximity. As a non-swimmer, I was perturbed. Bobbie Powell suggested oracularly that I should "assert my authority" and instruct the native paddlers to make land instantly. Beamish was as merry as the rest of us were grave; he would probably have waited for the hippos and then shaken hands with them; he seemed quite disappointed when we landed on a small island and at a safe distance watched the school snort themselves out of sight.

On another occasion we descended through the Palm Grove to the Boiling Pot to see the mighty waters of the Zambesi converge 400 feet below the Falls. It was a brilliant day with no hint of rain, yet no sooner had we finished lunch in the open, than

a storm of unexampled fury burst over our heads. The others, with the black boys, made a swift ascent. Beamish and I followed more leisurely, wet through to the skin. At the top the water was lying several inches deep; every path was blotted out; our companions were out of sight; thunder and lightning were incessant. I never saw such a swift metamorphosis in my life. Beamish was in his element; he might have won the championship at Wimbledon, so marked was his delight. Personally I was wondering when a streak of lightning was going to fell me to the ground, my clothes were sticking to me, and I hadn't the dreamiest notion of our whereabouts in relation to our hotel. We waded out in one direction, then waded back and tried another. Eventually, after negotiating a torrent breast-high, we made the railway embankment, and by following the rails towards the Suspension Bridge regained our quarters. The others had got in a quarter of an hour earlier, one of their party having been struck mildly by lightning.

Nor were the excitements of the day over. That night a leopard paid its respects to our station. The team were playing a mild game of poker in their bungalows away from the hotel. Coincident with a warning about the leopard the electric light went out and an improvised candle revealed a bat scuttling round the room—much to Powell's alarm. He did not share Beamish's keen relish at the prospect of playing a double against a leopard and a bat.

Gordon Lowe was another excellent companion on tour, ever anxious to keep himself physically fit, as keen as mustard in all important matches, never unwilling to take a joke against himself. He did better in singles than in doubles, losing only five singles throughout the tour, while his victory over Winslow

in the last "Test" at Cape Town contributed in no small measure to our victory.

Our small company was completed by R. B. Powell, than whom no cheerier, more vibrant lawn tennis tourist could possibly be imagined. A sound player, using a left arm and a resourceful brain to deceive his opponent, one of the best lobbers I have ever known, an intrepid poacher and a fast sprinter, Bobbie had also many accomplishments off the court. He had a good voice, both for public speaking and for singing, was a first-rate conversationalist and a diplomatist of some resource. Whether at Maxim's in Paris, on the roof garden at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, at the sumptuous Durban Club, or in his own club in Piccadilly, at the Beau Site, Cannes, or in the casino at Dinard, I never found R. B. anything but the best of company. Like all men who work and play on nervous energy, he had reacting days with spirits damped and eye out of focus. At Durban in the first "Test" he played like a champion; at Johannesburg in the second, he seemed a spent force; at Cape Town in the third, where I partnered him in doubles, his zeal and generalship were splendid. Something of a man about town, and a former private secretary to the Governor-General of British Columbia, his native land, he rather prided himself on correct ceremonial. Thus he took an extensive wardrobe to South Africa, including a silk hat, the receptacle for which was ever eluding him. It became quite a common episode for the whole team to be hung up at station or quay while a hunt was made for R. B.'s precious hat-box. It even accompanied him to the Victoria Falls! Nor did he ever mind a dig at these little vanities from other members of the team. Overhearing Powell rehearsing in his bedroom a speech which he was to

deliver the same night at the Kimberley Club banquet, Dixon summoned the whole team to the door. Through a chink we could see R. B. practising his rhetoric in front of a mirror. When we applauded and burst in, none laughed louder than poor Bobbie. . . .

Bobbie died a soldier's death at the foot of Vimy Ridge. None hated war more nor was less afraid to acknowledge his repugnance. He took service almost immediately with the Canadian Forces and left a safe job at Havre to go up to the fighting line. Captain of Canada both at Wimbledon and in America, he had also represented the All England Club against Germany. He had won the championship of Scotland and the Northern title at Manchester. A man who had warmed both hands before the fire of life, his friends will always mourn him.

Our arrival in South Africa synchronised with the opening of the Union Parliament by the Duke of Connaught. We found Cape Town *en fête,* gay with flags and bunting in his honour. Four months later, when returning to a normal city at the close of our tour, I could not resist playing off a little joke on the Mayor and Corporation who entertained us to a formal lunch at the Town Hall. "Mr. Mayor," I said, in replying to the toast of the team, "you have honoured us far beyond our deserts. Nothing could be more generous than your hospitality. I miss only one thing. Four months ago, when we landed in South Africa, Cape Town was gaily decorated in our honour. To-day I did not see a single flag. Is it possible——" And then, fortunately, somebody laughed, and the rather awkward silence was broken.

I am not likely to forget our first match against the Western Province at Rondesbosch. It was my privi-

lege to open the doubles, and I served two double faults in the first game. Perhaps there was some slight excuse. Just before going into court I had to make first a lightning decision and then a lightning change of clothes. It was like this. Through the good offices of Sir Francis (now Lord) Hopwood, a passenger in our outward vessel, whom I had met some years earlier at the Taff Vale railway strike, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and Princess Patricia honoured our first match with their presence. Incidentally, since Sir Francis had to consult the Duke's pleasure as well as an inordinately heavy programme already fixed, I made no mention of the possible favour when we met the Western Province officials on arrival. On the contrary, I said nothing when these gentlemen expressed regret that every moment of the Duke's time was booked up. A day or two later, Hopwood having kept his word and squeezed our little show into the royal itinerary, I received a telegram from the Duke's private secretary giving the time of his arrival on the ground. The Club secretary could scarcely credit his senses when I asked whether special seats could be found for the distinguished visitors.

The royal party arrived just as Dixon, to the consternation of the crowd, was winning a love set against Dr. Rowan, considered by the late R. F. Doherty to be the best player in Cape Colony. They stayed to the end of a much closer second set, won by Dixon after Rowan had led 5–4 and 40 love, and then the Duke asked me what match was to follow. I replied, "Another single, sir." "Isn't it rather hot for singles at this hour of the day?" he said, expressing the hope that something might be seen of a double. The programme, of course, had not been altered in

any way. I could already see Gordon Lowe's South African opponent coming out of the pavilion, and half guessed that Lowe was putting the final touches to his hair inside. Beamish and I were the first doubles pair down to play. We were both in ordinary clothes. Could the two matches be transposed? I consulted the Western Province captain; he said his two other men were quite ready and would go on. So the court was empty for five minutes while Beamish and I changed with the speed of variety artists. I remember that in the hurry I snatched up my partner's sweater, an almost exact replica of my own, wondering afterwards whether this mistake did not violate one of Ernest's cardinal rules. Had it put him off his game I should not have been surprised. However, it was the other way round. Beamish played well and confidently; I could do nothing right for several games. As we were making some progress, our visitors' time expired, and the Duke, Duchess, and Princess all stepped down on the court and shook hands very graciously. Last year, at Cannes, I was amazed to find that the Duke had a vivid recollection of his visit to Rondesbosch and remembered Dixon's love set.

Our itinerary was both long and arduous. Climatic changes were as varied as the scenery and mode of travel. Now the English summer of Cape Town, next the damper heat and strong nor'-wester of Port Elizabeth, reached by sea; the alternate rich sunshine and heavy rain of the Eastern Provinces in November; greater heat and heavier storms as we entered the Transvaal, passing from the vistas and verdure of Cape Colony to the rolling plains of the Karroo; Bloemfontein, fresher and greener than mining Kimberley, with luxuriant gardens shaded by willow and gum trees and watered by rain falling eighteen days out of thirty-

one in December; once-besieged Ladysmith with its shade temperature on our match day of 92°, presaging a dust-storm and brilliant lightning; a drop of 3000 feet in a brake-straining train to humid but delightful Durban, the beauty city of South Africa; up again to the drier heat of Maritzburg, capital of Natal; so to the Rand and Johannesburg, 6000 feet above sea-level, with a heat so dry that one could perspire freely and run no risk of chill; Pretoria with an atmosphere almost as hot but not so rarefied; up country in the Zambesi Express, equipped with shower-bath, to tropical Rhodesia—level going most of the time, quite unlike the switchback track of Natal; the phenomena of the Victoria Falls, its spray visible ten miles away, its rain forest penetrated by the team in old suits of pyjamas; a long and somewhat hazardous canoe journey on the great river to Livingstone, reached from the bank by trolley; back to Salisbury, delightful at all times climatically, the home of sport and true hospitality; Bulawayo and the unfenced Matoppos with its ever-impressive World's View; a three-day trek by train back to Cape Town. On this long train journey, seemingly colourless to the unobservant, I thought of what G. W. Steevens, whose grave I inspected at Ladysmith, had written: "It is only to the eye that cannot do without green that the Karroo is unbeautiful; every other colour meets others in harmony—tawny sand, silver-grey scrub, crimson-lighted flowers like heather, black ribs of rock, puce shoots of screes, violet mountains in the middle distance, blue fairy battlements guarding the horizon, and above all broods the intense purity of the South African azure—not a coloured thing like the plants and the hills, but sheer colour existing by and for itself."

After a varied experience of railway travelling in many countries and under many conditions, I will only say that I slept better on the South African trains than on any other, and this in spite of steep gradients at many points. By good fortune I met at Port Elizabeth, our first entraining place, the Divisional Superintendent of the C.S.A.R., a most courteous official who had piloted Mr. Joseph Chamberlain on his memorable mission. Mr. Aspinall was good enough to place at our disposal a private coach with three compartments. This inestimable boon remained with us as far as Queenstown; it was side-tracked with all our impedimenta on board when we stopped a day or two to play a match, and was then tacked on to our train. Not that the ordinary sleeping accommodation was to be despised. Clean and adequate bedding could at that time be secured for a modest half-crown, and save for the noise of shunting at an occasional junction sleep could be wooed successfully. Feather buyers, cattle farmers, and other business men boasted of their placid slumber on board. If the air were taken outside during the day there was much to observe —occasionally a herd of young elephants, ostriches on the borders of the Karroo, as common as grazing cattle, Kaffir huts whose inmates would sometimes run a long distance by the side of our saloon, offering wares and demanding pence; farther north a veritable concert of humming insects.

I do not think any of us found the thirty odd days spent on the rails either tedious or dull. It was a relief to rest our muscles after strenuous exercise, sometimes a relief to get a respite from the riotous hospitality *en route*. A good deal of mild poker was played, no one man being either the richer or the

poorer at the finish. Matches were used instead of counters until we secured a supply of the latter at Durban. Lowe did not play, but condescended to smile on the fluctuating fortunes of the others. Dixon was cautious, Powell wily but often "broke," Beamish and I rather irresponsible. Chancing to reach our saloon in advance of the others after dinner one night, Beamish and I arranged a little plant for Dixon and Powell. To allay any suspicion, the first pack was to be a normal hand; when the second was dealt round it was designed that Dixon should hold four queens and Powell four kings. All went well. The two conspirators, after drawing cards, threw in their hands casually. "Dickey" and Bobbie bid up with unabating confidence until the former's natural coyness in all gambling transactions and Powell's air of supreme recklessness induced Dixon to "see." His surprise at finding himself beaten and Powell's disappointment at losing a much-needed fillip to his resources were only ended by the explosive laughter of those in the know.

One of our pleasantest weeks was spent at Headquarters House, Pretoria. Field-Marshal Lord Methuen, then Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, had become a devotee of lawn tennis during the visit of Hillyard's team, and, a spectator of our first humble efforts at Cape Town, sent one of his Aides to me on the courts with an invitation for the whole team to visit him up country. Over two months elapsed before we reached the Rand, but immediately we got within call a telegram came renewing the offer of this kind hospitality. Thus the whole five of us came to spend a delightful Christmas under the Commander-in-Chief's roof. The little break was immensely appreciated. Christmas carols were sung at the

garrison church, a Christmas sermon was preached by the chaplain, and Christmas fare served at Lady Methuen's dinner-party at night, the temperature meanwhile registering 85° in the shade. Our host had two excellent private courts, and took a zealous hand himself in several informal sets. He will not mind, I am sure, if I relate an amusing incident. Gordon Lowe and Captain Beecher (A.D.C.) were opposing Lord Methuen and myself. My gallant partner had been wounded in action and could not move very quickly to return awkward balls. Lowe was playing a little too well for the occasion, and, picking up a ball with a view to showing him its peculiar seam, I called him to the net. There I suggested that our host should be given a little more useful practice; balls should be placed within his reach. Judge of my consternation when at dinner that night Miss Methuen (now the Hon. Mrs. Geoffrey Howard), having overheard the injunction, gave my little ruse away.

Lord Methuen followed our tour closely to the end. He and Lady Methuen were daily visitors at the Johannesburg "Test." They invited three of us to return to Headquarters House for a second visit (Dixon and Powell having private engagements to fulfil); came to watch our match against the Transvaal at Pretoria; and, finally, Lord Methuen arranged to inspect troops at Cape Town when our last "Test" was due, and entertained us to a private lunch on the eve of our departure. "You had a little pressure on Monday," Lord Methuen wrote to me after one of our Johannesburg matches; "but my presence most of Saturday is certain to give you confidence. Don't let the Polo Ball beguile you. I go as a hateful duty."

Before we went up to the Victoria Falls, I re-

ceived a letter from Mr. G. C. Latham, secretary of the Livingstone Lawn Tennis Club, N.W. Rhodesia, inviting us to extend our tour informally to this Empire outpost. "I am afraid," he wrote, "we could not put up any sort of match against you, but if you have not had too much tennis already by that time it would be much appreciated if you would bring over tennis kit and play here one afternoon. We have two quite good courts and it would do us all good to see your team play." Mr. Latham proposed sending a launch to the Falls to bring us up the Zambesi. I telegraphed that we would certainly try and fit in this little trip, which promised a unique experience. Accordingly, a month later, we set out, not in a majestic launch, but in two small and frail canoes, a third canoe bearing our luggage. Our Matabele paddlers could not commune with us in our native tongue, but they made splendid progress through the conflicting currents; we arrived without misadventure at the Livingstone boathouse. Trolleys propelled by natives and running on a light rail carried us to the township three miles distant. It was unmercifully hot, and I remember brushing bunches of tropical insects off my linen trousers as we shot forward on the trolley. The Administrator, Mr. A. L. Wallace, made us his guests at Government House. Having no newspaper to announce our arrival, the executive at the club adopted the device of parading a native sandwich boy, armed with a shell of beads which served as a rattle. On his back was a scroll of paper with these words inscribed in ink: "English tennis players will perform in Barotsi Centre when bell rings." And to prove that this announcement was genuine, when we drove up to the courts from Government House, a native rushed out of the gate clanging a bell and then dashed down the street. Our most

northerly court was also our softest; each footstep made a clean imprint on the ant-heap. Rain cut short the programme on the first day, but next morning, the crier having collected the inhabitants, Beamish and Lowe played a close double against Dixon and myself. The "gate" in Barotsi Centre could not have been more appreciative, nor could we have enjoyed the trip more.

Our visit to Stutterheim, the sheep-farming village at the base of the Matola Mountains, had its interesting features. On our progress up the coast we had seen only urban life, met only teams drawn from colonised towns. Here we encountered players essentially rural, their thoughts centred on the breeding of stock, their only opponents those who came to the village court. The enthusiasm of Stutterheim was boundless; our visit was felt to be a unique event in the annals of the district. The magistrate and the doctor met us with Cape carts at the nearest station, four miles away, and drove us through pasture uplands, enticing in their early summer attire, to our hotel, where a Scottish hero of the Boer War was in charge. The court, cleared out of the forest, lay opposite. It had been laid down by the farmers only two days before our arrival. These sturdy fellows had gone out to the neighbouring veldt in a farm cart, collected enough ant-heap, and spread it tenderly over the old foundation, fearful lest a storm, all too frequent at this period, should nullify their efforts. Before testing its qualities we saw something of the surrounding country. Behind South African ponies, four-footed mountaineers to whom fatigue was unknown, we climbed through prosperous cultivation to the Kologa Forest, home of fir-capped falls. The doctor's ponies, we were told, had done their sixty miles a day without a murmur. The

Kologa Forest was the shadiest place we had so far visited ; it was also the thickest in vegetation, and we had to pick our way warily through dense undergrowth and fallen trees over the winding burn to the falls. Ferns flourished abundantly in the clay soil, lending quite an English aspect to the scene. Tea and cakes made by the male hands of a local farmer were served by Kaffirs in a little clearing. Coming home, the South African ponies were given their heads with a vengeance ; no ride in the war zone could have been more exhilarating.

That evening waggons and carts of all descriptions drawn by oxen had left home from within a radius of thirty miles for the courts. More came at sunrise next morning—an unprecedented trek to watch a lawn tennis match. All these vehicles were drawn up Derby-fashion round the ant-heap court. Alas ! the morning heat presaged an afternoon storm. Only half our programme could be completed before the deluge swamped the surface. But enough was seen of the local players to kindle admiration not only for their zeal but for their strokes and strategy. Dixon was within two points of losing a set to Davis, a young farmer who had held the Border championship. He proved to be the first player we had then met in South Africa who dealt serenely with good length driving. Other farmers did well. It was agreed we should resume the next day, but the ground was still unplayable. At night we took lamps and picked our way, 'mid growling thunder overhead, to the local drill hall, when it was demonstrated that dancing was an accomplishment natural to the villagers.

The unconquerable spirit of Cecil Rhodes seemed to hover over all our travels. We lunched with Mrs. Botha, the Prime Minister's wife, at Groote Schuur,

his old Cape Town home, inspecting many interesting treasures, including a wonderfully varied zoological collection imported from all parts and alive in the Park outside. At Kimberley we saw vivid evidence of his great industrial activities. We visited the De Beers mines and saw the intricate process by which blue hauled up from the bowels of the earth passes through the crushing mills and the pulsator, and throws out from its residue those dull-looking crystals which ultimately become brilliant diamonds. An inspection of one of the native compounds, which accommodated altogether nearly 12,000 natives, revealed the statesmanship necessary to control labour. But those at meat sitting round the stoep fire looked anything but the depressed tools of capital. Of the twenty-four hours the native only worked eight; the rest of the day was his own. Passing through every department of this vast organisation, with its humanising elements, one could not help admiring the brain of Cecil Rhodes which had conceived it. In his own land of Rhodesia, of course, many relics of its founder abounded. Here at the top of the majestic Matoppos, commanding the World's View, lies his tomb, at which, ascending in motors from Bulawayo, we paid our humble tribute to his memory.

Rhodes's governing principle was "Anything but failure." We endeavoured to honour it on the lawn tennis courts of South Africa. Of thirty-one matches played only three were lost. One of them was the representative tie against South Africa at Johannesburg. But the margin here was so small—a matter of only two sets, with matches even—that, since we won by a convincing margin at Durban and Cape Town, our record was not materially impaired. As it was, our defeat in the Reef City was due in the main to

our failure in the doubles. R. B. was not his robust self when he partnered Lowe, and, with the latter tired after an exhausting single, this pair went down in a dust storm before Cockran and Kitson at the critical finish. Before this final double began we were actually a match to the good, and that after losing four matches out of six on the first day. Sound in wind and body, thoroughly acclimatised to a teasing altitude, without the strain of a long and exacting tour to impair their physical resources, our opponents undoubtedly had an advantage which, quite justifiably, they pushed home. Dixon, as I have mentioned, was within a stroke of defeat in singles both by Cockran and Kitson; gallantly did he survive each encounter. Beamish, at his best on the high-bounding floor, also won both his singles. Lowe won one (against Gauntlett)—an unexpected triumph; R. B. failed in both, nor did he win a double. Later our left-hander more than atoned for these delinquencies.

The crowds throughout South Africa were at all times sporting and generous. At Johannesburg the huge Rugby stands were filled with 5000 spectators, ever keen and appreciative of good play. Occasionally a facetious spirit would break out. "Had a good sleep, old man?" was a question hurled at Gordon Lowe by a stentorian voice when, a little tardy over his toilet, he came into court. But none minded these mild pleasantries. I recall that great cheering was raised when G. H. Dodd lowered the colours of Beamish on the Wanderers' Court, proving it to be no fluke by beating the same player in the final at Eastbourne last year—on a surface as pudding to the iron floor of Johannesburg. Whether we played before hardy sportsmen, well versed in international contests, in the larger cities, or the lonely farmers of the interior,

or the exiled enthusiasts in distant Rhodesia, the same spirit of Empire camaraderie pervaded our contact with the crowd. "I want to see the Home team do well," a Johannesburger said to me before the "Test." He meant *our* team.

CHAPTER VII

AMERICA AND AMERICAN INVADERS

IN lawn tennis annals the year 1920 will be regarded as America's own. Brilliant as the achievements of her players had been in the past, though the United States had produced two winners of the All Comers singles at Wimbledon—one of them subsequently to beat both Brookes and Wilding within three days in New York—though there had been more young players of promise in America than in any country of the world, national ambition had been thwarted in two main directions. No American since Wimbledon was invented had ever won either the singles or the doubles championships. The Davis Cup, founded in America by an American, had proved almost a will-o'-the-wisp to the strong American teams which hunted it in England and Australasia. Only once in twenty years had a challenge round been won out of America, and then by the narrowest possible margin. It almost seemed as if American champions who took ship to some foreign land carried with them some hoodoo, some luckless symbol of defeat.

But in 1920 every adverse precedent was broken, every quest was successful. Both the championships at Wimbledon and the Davis Cup were captured in a manner at once unique and conclusive. Before the war nobody in this country not watching the schooling-grounds of America had ever heard either of Tilden or Johnston. R. N. Williams had graduated in

Europe and had been marked out for distinction before he came to Wimbledon in 1913; but Garland was then a boy of sixteen with his name unmade. Yet these four between them achieved objectives for which, for nearly two generations, their countrymen had striven in vain. Tilden was a new-comer to Wimbledon. He won the singles championship at his first attempt. Williams and Garland, after beating Tilden and Johnston, became doubles champions. They had not played together in their own country; virtually they were a scratch pair. More notable even than their triumphs at Wimbledon, because their opponents were the elect of France, England, and Australia, and because the test was more rigidly imposed, the Americans won the Davis Cup without losing a single match in three rounds. Neither Tilden nor Johnston had played in the international championship before. In turn they defeated, both in singles and doubles, Gobert and Laurentz of France, Parke and Kingscote of England, and Brookes and Patterson of Australia. A brilliant sequence of victories over which our cousins on the other side may be permitted their meed of jubilation!

While joining in this hymn of praise, I am not so prejudiced as to imagine that America's newly-found crown cannot be shaken, nor, conceivably, removed; nor can the fact be overlooked that America, as a result of the war interregnum, had certain advantages over her competitors. Australasia lost Wilding and Arthur O'Hara Wood in the war; we ourselves had many losses among first-class players. In England, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium and France the development of natural resources was arrested in a manner far more exacting and over a period of time considerably longer than in America. Certainly Europe

had not settled down after her great upheaval when the United States shipped her invaders to these shores last June. For nearly five years in the belligerent countries there had been a suspension of organised lawn tennis; fires had to be restoked, machinery had to be overhauled, muscles tightened up, the ball refocused, even competitive zeal rekindled.

America only suspended her official championship for one year; in the lands of her rivals there was a gap of five years. America has always relied on young men to wage her lawn tennis battles abroad; she has many of them and can afford to discriminate. England and Australasia, and in less measure France, have, by habit and necessity, relied on older players. When a man is nearer forty than thirty, the suspension of match play for five years is a serious, and may prove a fatal, handicap. Personally I regard the record of Parke and Kingscote at Wimbledon last year with as much pride as any American can demonstrate over the performances of Tilden and Johnston. Both were in the war from the start, both remained in it to the end; both were under hot fire on many occasions and were lucky to escape with their lives. Yet, without any practice worthy of the name for five years, Parke beat Johnston in the championships and Kingscote was within measurable distance of beating Tilden in the same event. In the Davis Cup tie between England and America there was one crucial moment in three out of the five matches when our men had secured a winning position, and might, with a little more luck and conceivably with a little more pre-war "push," have converted victory into defeat. In putting these facts on record, one does not wish to moderate the note of triumph which America may justly strike; their recital cannot dim the lustre of

Tilden and Johnston. But they help to preserve our perspective all the same.

America owes her supreme position in the lawn tennis world to-day to several factors. We may examine them a little closely, for they possibly offer lessons to ourselves and to others. America is a young country, animated with the zeal and spontaneity of youth. Century-old traditions do not encumber her; she need not and does not recoil instinctively from action without precedent. Some of us in England may cavil at this spirit of independence. Its extravagances may ruffle our sense of dignity, strain our conception of modesty; but even the most prejudiced cannot deny the American his confidence, his genius for organisation, and his concentration. Caution, composure, and restraint are excellent qualities for countries unmenaced by competition, either in trade or in sport; they may prove negative and even nugatory traits in a twentieth century that has broken down old frontiers and old dynasties, shifted habits as well as inhabitants, and given democracy a unique incentive. Just as initiative is the opposite to inanition, so the strong and the free, regardless of tradition, must come to their own in the new world.

Organisation on broad and ambitious lines has made lawn tennis a national pastime in the United States. Imported forty-five years ago from England, like many other good things, the game appeals instinctively to the individualistic and combative qualities in the American. Nothing indecisive attracts him; he could never tolerate the drawn cricket match. The spectacular attributes of first-class lawn tennis, its call both for force and finesse, its opportunity for the sprinter, the contiguity of the players to the crowd, the fact that thousands of people at one and

the same time may watch every varying phase in a miniature battle in which strategy counts as much as strokes and counter-strategy and counter-strokes win the day—essentially these are elements dear to the American heart. And not in one State more than another. The game is pursued as vigorously in San Francisco as in New York; in the heart of the Union as on the fringe of its far-stretched frame. To say that it is a school and university game is to give it the place and vogue of cricket and football in England. If we have half a dozen nurseries for young players, America has half a thousand.

In a pushful, democratic country all things are possible, and the development of lawn tennis from its early introduction by the wealthier classes to its present incorporation into industrial life has been nothing less than remarkable. Municipalities have helped materially by constructing permanent public courts. From the Central Park at San Francisco have emerged such giants as McLoughlin and Johnston, followed and preceded by other first-class players. Conceive how youthful imagination in a city like 'Frisco is fired when two of its natives, recently boys on its public courts, attain to the international fame of McLoughlin and Johnston! Is it surprising that when Tilden paid a flying and quite informal visit to this municipal nursery a few months ago, and played doubles in turn with some of the most promising boys in the district, the excitement among the budding champions should have broken all precedent? Tilden did more than strengthen his own popularity by this simple act; he established a visible and practical ideal among hundreds who possessed the power to reach it.

As a recreation for the million, lawn tennis has recently taken a strong leap forward in America.

Many industrial companies have laid down first-class courts in their athletic grounds and encouraged workers to play. In Beloit, Wisconsin, one company alone has provided facilities for 200 employees. In the cotton mills of the south the mill-owners have built so many courts that an inter-mill league has recently been founded. In Chicago the Commercial League has been holding matches for many years; similar organisations flourish elsewhere. Rochester, equipped with a model Industrial Athletic Association, with a long waiting list of firms anxious to join, has now forty-four industrial courts and is building about twenty more. Lawn tennis in Rochester is regarded as a strike-breaker.

I mention these few facts not with the intention of disparaging our own institutions nor in the belief that the introduction of American methods into the European system is necessarily practical or to be desired; but they explain why America is able to provide a never-ceasing stream of young and active players, able by their training, environment, and inherent qualities to challenge the supremacy of the world. The resources of America are so vast and self-contained, facilities for transport so extensive, that no limitations of climate or surface need deter the enthusiast nor restrict his programme. He can play all the year round without crossing his own boundaries; he may play on clay, cement, or brick-dust as easily as on turf; he can even use an indoor court carpeted with battleship linoleum—a very good floor it is too; he may play in a public park after dark, his fellow-citizens sharing the expense of lighting the court under municipal control; in fact, he may, if he choose, play all round the calendar and all round the clock.

When it comes to organising a big event—a national championship meeting or a Davis Cup tie—the American is in his element. It is a business affair, anticipated, planned out, conducted, and "boosted" on business lines. Than the championship court at Forest Hills, New York, no arena in ancient Rome, prepared for its gladiators, could provide more excitement, nervous strain, or noise. My feelings in 1914 when I saw Brookes play McLoughlin before a throng of nearly 13,000 spectators were conflicting. It was early August and the heat in New York so devitalising that I remember getting out of bed three times during the previous night and taking a cooling shower-bath—doubtless a baneful expedient. But this high, humid temperature only served to emphasise one's admiration for officials who "bossed" the series of matches so efficiently, and for the players who came to them and engaged in them with no sign of exhaustion or dismay. And yet, while the English visitor could not fail to be impressed with the enterprise and acumen of the authorities and to find inspiration in their methods and even in their confidence, he missed that element of informality, the atmosphere of spontaneity, almost of improvisation, which makes Wimbledon and St. Cloud so attractive. I suppose modern championship lawn tennis has now become such a serious affair, engrossing so much time and thought and demanding its own special machinery, that certain traditions must inevitably crumble. The Americans are only prudent to build on broad, solid, and permanent lines. Nor do the members of the American governing body ever lose sight of the fact that lawn tennis is an amateur pastime, a pastime clean and strong, drawing its strength inherently from articles of faith undisturbed by expansion. Not once

but many times have Americans taken the lead in checking abuses and in safeguarding the amateur status. They may do things on a larger scale than Europe and invest some of these things with a greater advertisement than they possibly deserve, but both their enterprise and their zeal are directed to advance the interests of lawn tennis as a whole and not of any individuals who may be pursuing it.

Forest Hills has not always been the championship ground. Until 1915 the American national meeting was held at Newport, Rhode Island, a social rendezvous invested with sea breezes and the vivacious attributes of wealth in holiday mood. Admirably managed by a capable committee, the tournament lacked nothing save accommodation to seat the increasing thousands who desired to watch its progress, and facilities to transport them from the cities. When the West Side Club at Forest Hills, New York, prepared their stage for the Davis Cup contest in 1914, the authorities were quick to realise that here was a very tempting alternative to Newport, one which would permit the largest urban crowds to patronise the game. So the change was made, and if the climatic conditions at Forest Hills are less favourable to strenuous and continuous combat than those nearer the Atlantic, and if the social amenities may not be so pleasant, the sterner business side has gained. Considerable extensions to meet public requirements have been carried out at the West Side Club since I was there seven years ago. The surface of the show courts has been Wimbledonised as far as possible, the seating facilities increased, and the organisation generally rendered about as efficient as the most punctilious could desire.

Seating himself in a Pullman at the New York terminus, the visitor, having purchased his programme

on the train, reaches the pavilion enclosure within half an hour. In his wisdom he clads himself lightly, shading his eyes with a broad-brimmed hat and girding his neck with something that does not melt into pulp. Before him, making three sides of a turf square, he sees lawn tennis " fans " seated on tiers in mass formation—a vast throng of eager, articulate spectators. Very few greybeards are found in the stands—in vain a search is made for the old croquet lady who comes to Wimbledon ; the crowd is essentially of playing age and playing zest. While the majority of its units are drawn from New York offices—as many girls as men —a considerable percentage are pilgrims from other cities, supporters of their local competitors. The arena, when I was there, had three courts—a doubles court in the centre and two singles courts outside. The middle court is not used while the other two are in commission ; on the biggest occasion only one match is staged " inside." The run-back and side-run are thus beyond cavil ; indeed, so generous are they that the spectator seated in a back row does not get anything like so detailed a view of the play as at Wimbledon. On the other hand, the players undoubtedly gain. They do not feel that the crowd are caging them in, perhaps restraining some of their ardour in hunting full-pitching lobs, unconsciously affecting the *morale* of all but the most experienced. I remember playing an exhibition double on the Davis Cup court at Forest Hills, pairing up with Bobbie Powell against Doust and Dunlop, and feeling almost as if one were engaging in a private match under first-class conditions. One visualised the moving crowds as waves of wheat on a wind-swept field, and the applause, if one were ever conscious of it, almost sounded like a distant symphony. I can well believe that this material differ-

ence in environment influenced Johnston's play at Wimbledon last year, as it had affected several of his countrymen before. Great drivers need a maximum of elbow-room; the court is the same size, but their perspective of its dimensions is singular. S. H. Smith and Parke, other great drivers, were influenced in the same way. The broader setting of Forest Hills is more pleasing to Johnston's eye than the centre court at Wimbledon.

The American championships differ from our own in several other respects. The doubles championship is decided at another tournament and on another date. There are no ladies' events at Forest Hills. Regarding the singles championship as the national crown, the authorities set their faces sternly against any encroachment on its prestige or its progress. Thus, so far as possible, they ensure equitable conditions for all competitors. The need for varying the programme to please the gallery does not concern them. The crowd share their view and will gather just as thickly to watch young giants battling for supremacy in singles. Nor does America yet possess its Lenglen, and if it did the facilities of Philadelphia or any other city where the woman's championship is held could cater for her admirers.

Our conservative instincts may repel any desire to divorce the two championships in England, but if our object is to provide the highest standard of skill in the most important event of the year, the psychological factor must be considered. It is not a little singular that both Brookes and Patterson and Tilden and Johnston should have lost matches in the doubles championship at Wimbledon — matches they were expected to win and which would doubtless have given them the titles—after they had watched ladies'

contests on the same court. Their opponents, less sure of their chances, kept away from the stands. I hope I shall not be considered ungallant if I say that some of the ladies' matches at Wimbledon, interspersed between men's matches, strike a note of incongruity. A few of the men's ties may do the same thing, though not in the same measure. There is much to be said for the American method. Possibly some compromise may be practicable at the new Wimbledon—a continuous and undiverted run of male events, and then, or *vice versa*, a corresponding sequence of ladies' events.

To their umpiring and lining the Americans bring those qualities of directness and circumspection which are inherent. Their umpiring is definitely organised, its system rehearsed; ours is like the British Constitution, a matter of tradition and instinct and of improvisation. The best English umpires—such men as Commander Hillyard, Dr. F. H. Pearce, Mr. E. W. Timmis, and other "chairmen" at Wimbledon—are superior to any in the world, and the fact that English umpires are preferred on the Continent to any others is a pleasing and, I think, deserved tribute. Nevertheless, mainly through lack of effective organisation, tournament umpiring in this country, while possibly more tactful than tournament umpiring in the States, is slacker and less well-informed. Our cousins have lately founded a National Umpires' Association composed mainly of players and ex-players. Its resources are drawn upon at most open meetings and its members carry out the umpiring at the championships. The whole business is arranged "according to plan." The referee, beset with other worries, is not required to mobilise his corps of linesmen ten minutes before the match starts; these have all been nominated and

their places allotted the day before. Each official—and in big matches the number is as many as fourteen—receives a plan of the court indicating his exact position on it. He is instructed to attend at a definite time, and it is the duty of the "chairman" to have his table arranged completely for the feast before the players come in. Invariably players, past and present, are chosen to adjudicate on these important occasions, and they must possess an intimate knowledge of the rules; enthusiasm alone is not enough. Independent of the linesmen is the foot-fault judge—a more responsible authority even than the umpire, since the latter (apart from calling lets) only registers the decisions of his subordinates and announces the score to the crowd. The foot-fault judge, although he may be relieved in a long match, officiates at both base-lines alternately. He confines himself entirely to adjudicating the service. His attention is diverted by no other duty. When I was in New York, W. A. Larned, seven times singles champion of America, was the foot-fault judge in the Davis Cup doubles. As every one of the four players (Brookes, Wilding, McLoughlin, and Bundy) followed in his service with maximum speed, the office was most onerous. Larned discharged it with complete satisfaction to all concerned. When he foot-faulted, as he found it necessary to do on rare occasions (happily, none of them vital), he signalled to the umpire with his hand and the man in the chair called the foot-fault. The latter is, of course, on the look out for this signal; if he were not, the false start would inflict an undue strain. I was struck with the smooth and efficient working of this plan. Its efficiency depends, of course, on the capacity of the man on the line; above all, he must have the confidence of all the players.

I come now to the style and methods of American players. In England, as across the Atlantic, the game may be divided into epochs, each governed by the strokes and tactics, and not imperceptibly by the temperaments, of its contemporary champions. If evolution has been quicker in America than in England, because of the greater material available, and because of climatic and training advantages, it is only within the last year or two that any marked superiority in standard has been manifested. Even the supremacy of the American Davis Cup team in 1920 and the individual successes of the Americans at Wimbledon are not unconnected with the shorter break in development which the war imposed on our cousins. I have mentioned this factor previously, and it cannot be overlooked. Nevertheless the strokes and methods of Tilden and Johnston, different though they may be, embody a crystallisation of ideas, both physical and mental, which advances beyond the standard previously set up in either country. You cannot compare one artist with another unless you visualise at the same time their relative opportunities for progress and the degree of opposition which they were asked to overcome respectively. You cannot compare the Dohertys with Tilden and Johnston unless you can first gauge the relative ideals for which both were aiming. H. L. Doherty came nearer to reaching his ideal than Tilden, but Tilden's objective is higher than Doherty's. Not to admit that is to declare that the standard of the game has either remained stationary or gone back. Personally I believe it has gone forward, and the Americans, through their young and zealous athletes, have done the lion's share of the pushing. When I recall that Larned, Beals Wright, and Holcombe Ward were the contemporaries of the Dohertys

in their prime and that all could be relied upon to stretch the British champions to their limit both in singles and doubles, and when I remember that these level matches were waged by Americans admittedly possessing limitations — men who were specialists rather than all-court players—I find strong *prima facie* evidence to support my own case. It may be claimed for the Dohertys that no American has reproduced, even with less grace, the best strokes of these brothers. The back-hand drive of R. F. down the line and H. L.'s faultlessly placed smash from any part of the court were, and still remain, incomparable. But the strain and character of modern match-play is appreciably greater to-day than it was fifteen years ago; it undoubtedly demands a greater speed of foot, a wider category of stroke, and a more aggressive attack. Physically—in their resources of stamina—Tilden and Johnston are superior to the giants of the past; they are not only younger, but are better trained men; their experience is as great and the nervous strain imposed on them appreciably greater.

Until last year no American invader had satisfied his own or his country's ambition at Wimbledon. Two before Tilden had reached the last stage; both had failed, and against the same player, because their ground strokes were not equal to the strain of a long and exacting match. Their successor in 1920 was not as finished in some departments as these two—certainly he was not so deadly overhead as McLoughlin—but he was armed at points where they were not; the whole was greater than the part. I wish Tilden could have been put to the same test as Beals Wright and McLoughlin—could have opposed Wilding in the challenge round. The Wilding of 1910 he would have beaten; I am not at all sure about the Wilding of

1913. It is true McLoughlin beat Wilding, as he beat Brookes, in 1914; and I agree with Larned that Tilden's greater variety of stroke and infinite resources as revealed in 1920 would have proved too much for McLoughlin, even in his gala year. But the Wilding of 1914 in America was not the best Wilding, and I am inclined to think that, given maximum zeal and training, the latter would have applied the same methods of attack to the present champion as Johnston, and applied them a little more effectively. Yet Tilden is a better player at twenty-seven than Wilding was at the same age. When Tilden reaches Wilding's zenith year he will probably be better than Wilding ever was. Johnston, too, will move forward. Nor will the advance be restricted to any two or three players. America is rich in potential champions and richer still in the instinct for development revealed by those who lead lawn tennis on the other side.

CHAPTER VIII

DAVIS CUP MATCHES

HOW much lawn tennis owes to Mr. Dwight F. Davis, of St. Louis, U.S.A., it is impossible to estimate. Called by any other name, his silver bowl might be, like the marconigram, as useful and as epoch-making. But unless Dwight Davis had given his idea practical conception through the governing bodies of America and Britain, the game would certainly have lost a powerful incentive.

Originated twenty years ago as an annual contest between England and America, the Davis Cup has promoted a championship far more international than its designation implies. Last century the game was played in watertight compartments. It is now played, as it were, on a court so extended that its base-lines are fixed in different hemispheres. Hands across the sea is synonymous with hands across the net. America and England, the joint founders of the Davis Cup, have added to their company, first other nations of Europe, like France and Belgium, then the British Oversea Dominions, next other Continental countries, Holland and Spain, and now Oriental countries like India and Japan.

A common interest has extended far beyond the players actually concerned, year by year, in the Davis Cup contest; it has created a sympathetic bond between all the players, high and low, in the various countries. Who will doubt that the camaraderie

engendered by sport has been strengthened through this friendly clash of rackets, first at one end of the earth and then at the other—between Americans and Australians in New Zealand, British and Americans at Wimbledon, the French and Belgians at Brussels, the Dutch and South Africans at Arnheim? Golf may mix her giants on both sides of the Atlantic and in France, cricket may interchange her teams between England and Australia, polo and yachting may kindle international rivalry between America and ourselves. Lawn tennis through the Davis Cup spreads her net over a much wider field. The most cosmopolitan of all ball games has its boundaries fixed only by civilisation. Its devotees require no passport; they find every court open to them. The Davis Cup has advertised this world movement like nothing else could. Its matches have been of supreme educational value. The standard of the game has been advanced not only by the matches themselves, regarded as exhibitions of modern skill and strategy, but by the stimulant left behind on the rank and file. If this be true of the older lawn tennis countries like England, America, and France, what must the effect be in less accessible countries like Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa? What will the effect be in Japan a few years hence?

The first three Davis Cup matches were decided in America. They were matches between England and America, contests conforming to the original idea of the founder. If the reader desires an intimate diary of these earlier engagements, he may care to consult a little book [1] I wrote a few years ago. Therein he will find set out the story of the courageous, if unsuccessful, invasion by Gore, Roper Barrett, and E. D. Black, the

[1] *The Story of the Davis Cup* (Methuen).

deep impression made on this team by the American service, then a new-fangled weapon, and by courts and balls very different from our own. He will read of the failure of the Doherty-Pim mission in 1902, its causes and its object-lessons, and of the triumphant tour of the Doherty brothers a year later—a second visit which exported to this country not only the Davis Cup but the singles and doubles championships of the United States.

For three years England defended the cup without the loss of a match. I witnessed all these matches. Of those in 1905 and 1906 the abiding impression remains that America was distinctly unlucky not to win one of the ten. Indeed, the 1905 challenge round will probably be remembered, despite its five-love victory for the Home team, as one of the closest, as it was certainly one of the best, in the history of the Cup. For America to lose two five-set singles against H. L. Doherty and to come within a few strokes of vanquishing the Doherty brothers on their own court, demonstrates the formidable character of the attack. It was not an attack so young in limb nor so versatile in stroke as that launched by the Americans of 1920, but the opposing skill was of a higher calibre and the close character of the contest was unquestionably a tribute to Ward, Wright, and Larned.

Elsewhere I refer to Ward's dramatic match against the younger Doherty. Larned had much superior equipment off the ground; he fought the British champion on more orthodox lines; but his effort, if less thrilling in its opening stages than Ward's, was really more threatening, for he led H. L. by two sets to one and was still in the running for the match in the fourth set. Our second string, Smith, defeated Larned with the loss of only one set, though all four

were close, and he beat Clothier (who deputised for Ward when the issue was decided) quite easily—results which, even more than the Doherty singles, revealed the relative superiority of the English driving at that time. To the mind of the American volleyer, Smith was wielding a heavy sword, Doherty only a rapier; and while the finesse of the second might in a long duel defeat the force of the first, the American preference for short engagements (or at any rate for matches with a mid-course respite) made Doherty a less difficult problem than Smith.

I regard the doubles match between the Dohertys and Ward and Wright as one of the finest I have ever had the good fortune to witness. It may have lacked on either side the fierce, destructive service which McLoughlin or Tilden can supply, but the ground strokes of the brothers, especially R. F.'s backhand service returns down the line, H. L.'s quiet but faultless smashing of deep lobs, the cross volleying of Ward and Wright, checked or deep as the occasion offered, and, above all, the wonderful manner in which the two visitors hunted and recovered smashes "in the country"—these, and the fluctuating fortunes of each side, gave a rare quality and excitement to the battle. The Americans richly deserved their ovation at the finish. They had suffered the worst of the luck, and the crowd did not forget the fact. Once at a critical stage in the fifth set, when every stroke was of vital consequence, Wright served a winner to R. F. from the left-hand court. The ace would have meant the game—an index game. R. F. made no attempt to return the service; he was under the impression—so he informed me afterwards—that the score was deuce and that H. L. was receiving. The hallucination—not uncommon in long and tense

contests—might have cost the brothers the match. The Americans dissolved the look of perplexity on the umpire's face by demanding a let. They subsequently lost the point and the game. It was a fine act of sportsmanship. Again, at a later and even more momentous stage—I think when the brothers were within a stroke of losing the vantage game in the fifth set, with Ward's service to follow—Ward, in negotiating a decisive kill at short range, grazed the net in his downward swing. The aberration cost his side the game, for the Dohertys went out at 8–6.[1]

A week before this challenge round at Wimbledon there had been some memorable matches in the preliminary round at Queen's. Both Brookes and Wilding made their Davis Cup début against Austria, Brookes with his terrifying service proving much too formidable for Kinzl and von Wesseley, and Wilding, then at Cambridge, winning both his singles against the same players with the loss of one set in four. A partnership that was to become famous subsequently was then founded. On July 14, 1905, Brookes and Wilding, strangers alike to each other's method and personality, played their first double, and it is yet a further proof of what familiarity in double harness means that the young Austrians should have pressed them hard in two sets out of three.

The match which followed against America was chiefly remarkable for the defeat of Brookes in all his three ties. Wright beat him after one of the longest volleying duels ever fought—a match similar in length, though not in standard, to their great battle at Melbourne three years later. There were two sets, the first and third, of twenty-two games each, and both

[1] The full score in favour of the Dohertys was 8–10, 6–2, 6–2, 4–6, 8–6.

were won by Wright. The other two were close. The service played a great part in the match and nearly dominated it ; but Brookes was then serving his googly exclusively, and Wright, coming from the land of break services, was a little less embarrassed by this attack than was Brookes by Wright's persistent chopping to the Australian's backhand during the rallies. Both men, of course, were left-handers, and even the seasoned student, anticipating the moves ahead, had to remind himself constantly of the inverse strategy. Larned revealed the strength of his ground strokes by beating Brookes in three sets, the first a prodigious affair of twenty-six games, the second and third, with Brookes tiring, easy bouts. In the doubles, Wright and Ward gave an earnest of their power—a week later nearly equal to the task of overcoming the Dohertys—by beating Brookes and Dunlop by three sets to one.

The 1906 matches will always be associated with the retirement of the Dohertys from international lawn tennis. The brothers left the Davis Cup arena at Wimbledon with an unbeaten record, a feat only equalled among Englishmen by S. H. Smith. While H. L. retained his skill to the end—Ward never looked like taking him into five sets again—there was less "devil" about his game. In his second singles, R. D. Little, never one of the greatest Americans though always a punitive volleyer, took two sets from him—a sign of dallying rather than decay. Little used a forehand drive-volley on the run with great effect, but his ground work was uncertain, and once he fell back the end was certain. On the other hand, R. F. was obviously not equal to the strain of a big "five-setter." He was pressed into the doubles reluctantly, and the brothers managed to stave off

successfully a determined assault by Ward and Little, who won twenty-three games to their opponents' twenty-nine; but in the rapid volleying exchanges and in overhead play R. F.'s slower mobility was a relative weakness, and few of his intimates were altogether surprised when, a fortnight later, Smith and Riseley beat the Dohertys for the second time in the challenge round of the doubles championship. Strewn about earlier chapters will be found several references to the brothers' influence on the game. In the Davis Cup annals their name will ever be associated with the first capture of the trophy from America and its staunch defence for three years in England. But even more permanent than their play was the example of their sportsmanship. The Dohertys founded a tradition in international courtesy; the moral side of the Davis Cup gained immeasurably by their early participation in the contest.

In 1907 a new page in Davis Cup history was turned. The competition ceased to be an annual battle between England and America with one or two European countries affording gun practice to the predestined challenger; it became an affair of continents. Only two matches were played in 1907, both at Wimbledon, but these proved to be two of the most strenuous, two of the closest, on record. Australasia survived them both and won the Cup for the first time. Aggregate strokes do not affect the decision of matches, but it is worth noting that in the first tie America won 672 points to Australasia's 703 and in the second England's winning strokes were only 29 less than America's. Considering that the Dohertys and Smith had both dropped out of the home team, England relying exclusively on two players who had failed in the first match of 1900, the second result was a great

tribute to the fighting ardour of Gore and Roper Barrett.

The Americans would probably have beaten Australasia if Karl Behr, their second string, had been as good a general as Beals Wright. Behr was a great artist and could never give the gallery a dull moment; his volleying sorties were dramatic in their intensity and often overwhelming in their effect; he was a brilliant specialist. In addition to his strokes, which, when under control, brooked no resistance, his idiosyncrasies on court were rather disturbing to an opponent. After sprinting to the net behind his service—rather like an aeroplane following a torpedo, —and either killing the return outright or closing the rally with a "misfire," Behr would run his fingers through his long black hair, pause for meditation, turn solemnly round, and then walk with slow, tragic step back to the base-line. The time saved by the hit-or-miss character of his volleying was more than lost by these long intervals between the rests. Wilding was not a very experienced match player in 1907, but he gave proof of his inflexible will in his single against Behr. The match went into five sets; not once but several times would the American have made his position secure by a little more circumspection. He missed a "sitter" at short range in the fifth set which, had the chance been accepted, would have made him 4–2. It was his last brilliant error, for he did not win another game. That foozled smash possibly settled the destiny of the Cup. As Wright beat Wilding on the first day, and the Americans beat Brookes and Wilding after a great double on the second —cunningly, Wright and Behr had not unmasked all their guns when meeting the same pair in the championships—another victory would have brought them into

the challenge round against a team they would doubtless have overcome.

No defence was more unexpectedly stubborn than that provided by Gore and Roper Barrett in 1907. Brookes had just won the championship by the genius of his service and volleying; Wilding, with whom he secured the doubles championship, had taken him into five sets, a feat no English competitor achieved. Yet these two Australasians, fortified by success over the strong American team, only beat England by the odd match in five. Gore's exhibition of driving against Brookes, though unproductive of a set, would have demoralised all but the greatest opponent. He frequently scored aces outright off Brooke's best services. Without a similar response to the Australian's opening stroke, Barrett was quickly beaten, but Wilding, defeated by Gore, might well have fallen a victim to Barrett's guile had he not, with great tenacity, held on to and won the fourth set. I have mentioned the doubles in a previous chapter—a match which, if lacking the volleying crispness of 1921, will ever be memorable in the annals of Wimbledon.

Australasia carried the Davis Cup across the southern seas and held it for four years. There was no competition in 1910, but in 1908, 1909, and 1911 the attack on the holders assumed a uniform course. In each of these three years we sent an English team to America; on each occasion the home side won. But when the Americans carried their challenge across the Pacific they came back empty-handed.

The excursions of American players in Australia and New Zealand are particularly noteworthy for several reasons. The Davis Cup has done much to foster camaraderie between distant countries. That was one of the objectives of those controlling its

destinies, and it has been strikingly achieved. Before Beals Wright and Alexander went to Melbourne in 1908 the game of lawn tennis had a local rather than a national vogue. Norman Brookes had won the championship a year earlier, it is true, but the honour had been gained several thousand miles away, and there was no player in Australia then who could play a level match with Brookes in public. Indeed, Brookes about fifteen years ago was almost a product of the private lawn; virtually his only opponent was his brother, to whom he could give thirty and a beating. The Australian public had been rather sceptical about the athletic qualities of lawn tennis. In 1908 their eyes were opened. When they saw Norman Brookes and Beals Wright battling for five sets in a hot north wind, with the temperature at 102° Fahr. in the shade, the future of international lawn tennis in Australia was assured. This single—indeed the whole five matches in the contest—will always be memorable. The test of stamina and fortitude was one of the most severe ever imposed in amateur sport. Wright had won the first two sets with the loss of only three games; he lost the third set at 7–5 after being on the threshold of victory, and the fourth at 6–2. The fifth set yielded twenty-two games before the American, with a shade more reserve than his rival, nosed his way out.

To appreciate the strain of this struggle you must remember that the previous day, just as hot and devitalising, Brookes and Wilding had fought and won a five-set double against Wright and Alexander. Anthony Wilding told me that he regarded this double not only as the most exciting, but as providing the highest class tennis of his career. Australia won the first two sets, America the third and fourth. The visitors took the first three games in the fifth set—an advantage which

in a fast match, on a fast court and in a bright light, seemed almost decisive. But at this stage Brookes, who had declined temporarily, rushed back to form. Four-all was called, and at 5–4 Wilding had the service. His side went sternly to 40–15. A universal "Oh!" echoed round the arena when Wilding served a double fault. Wright scored with a smash, Brookes netted. 'Vantage to America. A magnificent rally followed, and in it Wright fell. Alexander, close in, played his two opponents single-handed. Three times he volleyed fine volleys, then netted one of Wilding's famous dipping drives. In what proved to be the last rally of all, Alexander fell in a tremendous effort to reach the ball near the side-boards. Wright was behind him and tossed—just over the base-line. Seven thousand throats cheered that match, as well they might in 102° Fahr. I like to remember, as evidence of its admirable sporting tone, that never a line decision was questioned by look or gesture, and that the four competitors pooled their drinks at the umpire's stand. This was Wright's Davis Cup match. He beat both Brookes and Wilding in the singles. Alexander took Brookes into a fifth set on the opening day; on the last day he was done, and Wilding beat him fairly comfortably, thus deciding the Cup's fate.

Next year America made a bold experiment. Two young Californians, little more than boys, were dispatched to Sydney to face the redoubtable Brookes and Wilding. The youngsters were beaten, but even the shrewd Australian captain underestimated their abilities. McLoughlin won a set from Wilding. Melville Long should have won a set from Brookes. In the doubles the Americans hunted the home pair all the way home, and won twenty games to their twenty-seven. One cannot doubt that the introduction of

fresh, young blood into the Davis Cup arena was sagacious policy. Five years later the red-haired youth from San Francisco beat both Brookes and Wilding (the latter in his last public single) on his own soil.

Never was there greater lawn tennis surprise than America's defeat in her third Australasian expedition in 1911. Her supporters were in high fettle, as well they might be. W. A. Larned (seven-time champion of U.S.A.), Beals Wright (the hero of the 1908 match), and McLoughlin (much improved) were the challenging side. The defenders were without Wilding, detained in England on business; they relied on R. W. Heath and A. W. Dunlop to support Brookes. The great invading team failed to win a match. There were some extenuating circumstances. The weather at Christchurch was in bad form; Larned had contracted rheumatism, Wright was indisposed; the court was soft. Yet the result was astonishing. McLoughlin was the only man among the visitors who shone. He played brilliantly in the doubles, paired with Wright, and took Brookes into five sets on the last day. The defeat of Larned by Heath on the first day was a result unexpected by winner and loser alike. Larned was never seen at his best out of America; but he went there, as Rim went to America in 1902, after his zenith.

By the irony of fate, England, beaten thrice successively on American courts, was victorious in Australia on her first invasion. America was recuperating; England slipped in and achieved a seemingly hopeless task. When J. C. Parke, Dixon, Beamish, and F. G. Lowe set out for Melbourne in the autumn of 1912, the expedition was regarded as a forlorn hope. And on paper it was. But Parke, trained into the finest driving form by systematic practice at Melbourne,

defeated Brookes in an historic encounter, and the foundation of a great triumph was laid. Writing to me from Australia, A. E. Beamish thus described Parke's methods:

"Brookes got 4–1 in the first set before Parke could gauge the speed of his service or get used to its bound, Brookes using his straight, fast service without the American twist and hang. When Parke got his bearings he hit his returns very fast and firmly all over the court. On the backhand he played a fairly high slow shot at Brookes's body, waited for the return, which was not punched, and then drove joyously and with the most extraordinary accuracy all over the court, passing Brookes cleanly with the finest cross-court drives. Parke revelled in slow stuff, not punched out deep and not hit hard, and this Brookes gave him, and afterwards stood watching the drives fly past him, while at other times his volleying movements came too late and put the ball out or in the net. Brookes also gave his opponent angles, and that was what Parke wanted."

The Irishman won by 3 sets to 1, actually leading 5–1 in the third set and requiring only two points for a straight-set victory. Parke did not slack off, but Brookes improved and took the set at 7–5—a fine, if vain, recovery. In winning six successive games, Brookes changed his service, delivering a hanging American service which gave him more time to come in. Possibly if the Australian had exploited the centre theory more in the first half of the match, thereby cramping Parke's cross drives, as Tilden did at Wimbledon last year, the result might have been different. It may be noted that Brookes beat Parke both at Sydney and at Melbourne subsequently,

though in neither match was Parke given the further test of a five-set encounter.

That experience did not come again until 1914 at Boston. The play was very different on this occasion, though the number of games contested was precisely the same. The tennis was uneven; neither player was at his best. Even from my seat in the stand I could see that both were conscious of strain. The fact was that Europe's impending disaster lent an air of unreality to the engagement; our thoughts were diverted; we could not concentrate them on this little strip of turf in Boston. Nevertheless the match was as close and exciting as an American crowd could possibly desire. When Parke went from 1–3 to 5–3 in the fifth set—the service of Brookes having lost its "bite"—I could see only one end to a fluctuating tussle. In both the ninth and tenth games Parke was within a stroke of victory, and it cannot be said that either chance was easy. But the Irishman was distinctly unlucky in one respect. Leading 30–15 in the tenth game, he came up to put away a purely defensive return by Brookes. He made a certain winner, and every one on the ground, including the umpire, thought the score was 40–15. But Parke's racket had grazed the net, so narrowly that only the player was conscious of the incident. Parke advised the umpire and the game was squared. Since he won the next point, this aberration undoubtedly robbed Parke of victory. Brookes went out at 7–5, a distinctly lucky winner.

But I must go back for a moment to 1913, the year in which America sent McLoughlin to England and won the challenge round by the narrowest possible margin at Wimbledon. Before they came to the British holders, the Americans beat Australasia at

New York, Germany at Nottingham, and Canada a Wimbledon. All these victories were gained by a conclusive margin. I retain a vivid impression o the Nottingham matches, the first Davis Cup tie hel in the Midlands. As Dr. Flavelle and I were examinin the court on the morning before play began, th former, who was a very conscientious referee, decide to measure the lines. The side-lines were found to b appreciably short, a matter of inches. Of course ther was a hullaballoo ; the existing lines had to be obliter ated by an elaborate process, and new lines engraved Had the error been detected during or after the matc the results recorded would have been null and void I never go to a Davis Cup match now withou asking the referee whether he has measured th court.

The Germans failed to win a match against th Americans, but they played good tennis for all that For two sets Froitzheim gave a wonderful displa against McLoughlin. His health had been poor an he had even doubted the wisdom of participating i the match, but there was no trace of any physica weakness in the first half. He returned McLoughlin' service, standing a yard inside the base-line, wit confidence ; sometimes he passed him cleanly ; mor often he returned the ball with sufficient guile i it to draw a defensive volley from the American then he made a winning drive of delightful precision A backhand cross drive, dipping to McLoughlin's feet was the German's chief scoring stroke, but he als made some fine forehand drives down the line, an some of his lobs were too good for McLoughlin to kill But after he led 2–0 in the third set, Froitzheim neve looked like a winner again. It was not so much tha McLoughlin improved as that Froitzheim, becomin

exhausted, lost his power to retrieve McLoughlin's best ground strokes and so pass an incoming volleyer. In the fifth set McLoughlin could even afford to remain back; Froitzheim's drives had lost their sting and length. The light was atrociously bad and the balls discoloured by rain—adverse conditions which undoubtedly affected the play. While Williams wore steel points a quarter of an inch long to retain his foothold, Kreuzer employed string nets over his shoes. The Germans, through Rahe and Kleinschroth, were three times within a stroke of winning the doubles; it was a tribute to the temperamental soundness of McLoughlin and Hackett that they should have saved the match. On the third day, with the issue decided, Williams played brilliantly against Froitzheim, every department of his game showing a remarkable firmness. To see Williams at his best is a sheer delight; there is no finer stroke player in the world.

Before America opposed England in the challenge round they met and defeated Canada—a result always anticipated, but moderated in violence by the shrewd play of the late R. B. Powell. McLoughlin was expected to "eat up" the Canadian captain; the feast did not take place. A pluckier display than that rendered by Powell against a player admittedly his superior has seldom been seen. The court was slow after rain and the Canadian used his cut drives and stop volleys dexterously. The trick of leaving the "backhand" court exposed so that a left-hander with sprinting powers might use his forehand caught out even McLoughlin. Powell also lobbed very cleverly. He led 5–4 in the first set and delayed its issue for eighteen games. In the third set, too, he fought most gallantly. In the doubles Powell and Schwengers kept the Canadian flag flying longer than anybody

expected; if Schwengers had been as confident as his partner they would have secured a set.

The challenge round of 1913 had its genuine thrills and for England one moment of supreme mortification. Parke opened the match by a brilliant victory over McLoughlin, a victory gained by superb hardihood in the fifth set. McLoughlin made many mistakes off the ground, only discounting them by the scoring power of his service. It was Parke's subsequent mastery over his service which eventually won him the match. By coming closer in—probably inspired by Wilding's success in the singles challenge round three weeks earlier—he was able to take the ball on the rise, using a hooked, backhand shot which caught McLoughlin at his feet and yielded a defensive return. Parke led 5–3 in the fifth set and was caught, but he kept remarkably cool at this crisis, and, winning the next two games, passed out through cheering crowds to the pavilion. The succeeding single between Williams and Dixon was equally close and exciting; the easier stroke-play and the greater variety of shot made it a finer spectacle. The young American appeared to have command of the match when he led 2–0 in the fourth set with a set in hand; but at this stage came many lapses and a too eager attack. Dixon had been outplayed for a period; the boot was now on the other foot and the Englishman won six games and the set. But for untimely double faults in the fifth set—a Dixonian habit—the Englishman might have won the match.

The doubles is italicised in my memory. It opened with a strategic miscalculation on the part of McLoughlin and Hackett. They paid Barrett the compliment of neglect only to find that the favoured Dixon was in fine form, the stronger on the day of the

two. Thus ground shots directed persistently into Dixon's court were picked up by low volleys, beautifully accurate in their placing. Teased into excess, the Americans made mistakes or returned balls high enough for Dixon to kill outright with his forehand sweep volley. With Barrett intervening cleverly wherever he got the chance, the home pair snatched the first set at 7–5. The next two sets were dramatically brief. Having discovered the wisdom of lobbing Barrett, Hackett withdrew from the picture and allowed McLoughlin to kill anything smashable thrown up from the base-line. If Hackett lobbed short, as he often did, Barrett's pushed volley gave McLoughlin a further chance of bringing off a fine centre drive. Time and again the Californian scored certain winners. But the end was a long way off. McLoughlin changed his service end in the third set, facing the sun—an injudicious policy which gave England a 3–0 lead. Barrett's relatively soft returns were embarrassing Hackett; from the rallies confined to these two Barrett usually emerged triumphant.

But in the fourth set Hackett met this sinister attack by a bold advance. He got in a yard nearer to the net and volleyed down Barrett's push shots to Dixon's feet. The crisis came when the Englishmen, a set in hand, led 5–3 in the fourth set. The Americans showed their fine resolution. Barrett's service, its deceptive softness of no avail, was won to love. McLoughlin's service followed and should have prevailed from thirty. But when smashing an easy lob at 40–30, the American broke a string of his racket. With a new weapon, asking the umpire's permission, he served a breaking-in ball — an unprecedented privilege at such a stage. Missing another smash, McLoughlin was faced with 'vantage against his side

—only a point separated the holders from victory. There was a breathless silence. McLoughlin served to Dixon and volleyed his return sharp and true through the English pair. Then, with immediate danger over, he served two balls which won the tenth game. Dixon double-faulted in the eleventh game and lost it. The match was squared, and the fifth set, another keen struggle, taken by the Americans at 6–4. McLoughlin was undoubtedly the hero of the match. Neither Tilden nor Johnston has ever given such a wonderful exhibition as the Californian provided on that day. Hackett, while canny, was often lamentably soft. McLoughlin was the ace-winner; his smashes and forehand drives were magnificent. The issue was quickly settled on the third day when McLoughlin beat Dixon in three sets, only the first in dispute. Parke defeated Williams by three sets to two. If the fate of the Davis Cup had depended on this match it is possible the margin would have been wider.

Another thrilling chapter was added to the story of the international championship in 1914. It might almost be called "Round the World in Twenty Months." The Davis Cup had left Melbourne in the custody of the English invaders in November 1912. Eight months later it was captured by America in this country and crossed the Atlantic—the first time for twelve years. In less than a year it was back again at Melbourne. I say "back again," but as a matter of actual fact, though the Australasians defeated the holders in New York in August 1914, the trophy, owing to the war and the risk of its loss on transit, was kept in a safe deposit on the American side while international lawn tennis was suspended.

All the matches save two in 1914 were decided in America. England (having beaten Belgium and France), Australasia, Germany, and Canada send their men to the courts of the holders. I was privileged to accompany the English team and to witness the ties at Pittsburg, Boston, and New York. England had only won one Davis Cup match in America since the beginning of things and did not expect to win this one. Even less confident did we become when the war clouds gathered just after we landed and the enervating summer atmosphere of Eastern America was rendered less supportable by ominous rumour. My outward and home voyages were materially different. Going out in mid-July, Parke, Arthur Lowe, Kingscote, Mavrogordato and myself enjoyed the usual amenities of a crowded liner. I recall one incident of a pleasant trip. A daily paper containing the latest wirelessed news was published on board, and I arranged with the editor that he should announce the result of the first day's play between Australasia and Canada, decided at Chicago. The English team were to play the winners at Boston. The odds were at least five to two on Brookes beating R. B. Powell, and at dinner the night before I got Parke to lay me ten pounds to four on the Canadian's defeat. The next morning while I was reading on deck after breakfast, Arthur Lowe, a rather late riser, came up and wished me many happy returns. Then he added, "And I see you've won ten pounds from Parke—a useful birthday present." I expressed incredulity; he suggested I should follow him to the saloon. There Parke, looking a little crestfallen, handed me two five-pound notes. Mavrogordato, Kingscote, and Lowe, together with some American sportsmen on board, were discussing the result. The intelligence

was quite clear. Dated Chicago, July 23, the message ran :

"Australasia began her match against Canada at the Onwentsia Country Club to-day in a temperature of 100 degrees. All the players were exhausted. Powell beat Brookes 3–6, 5–7, 6–3, 6–2, 6–0. Wilding beat Schwengers 6–8, 7–5, 6–8, 9–7, 6–3."

At dinner that night champagne was circulated at my expense. Then Parke and I divulged our conspiracy. The figures were entirely fictitious. There had been no bet at all. As a fact, Brookes beat Powell with the loss of only four games in three sets and Wilding did not lose a set to Schwengers.

Coming home, how different! All was suspense, speculation, and foreboding! Doust and I stole out of New York harbour in the middle of the night, all lights out aboard. Our liner had but a handful of passengers. The U boats were yet to come, but the *Karlsruhe* was still at large, and we steered a southerly course on a lonely sea. We had no news of the war's progress during our crossing, and arrived at Liverpool to find the Germans in full cry for Paris.

But to go back three weeks to the last lawn tennis match played by the Germans against the British Empire team. I arrived at the Allegheny Country Club at Sewickley, near Pittsburg, to find a very placid, unwarlike party. The luxurious club-house was chock-a-block, and it was only by the extreme courtesy of a member that I secured a bedroom. Froitzheim and Kreuzer seemed to be much in request as dancing partners. Brookes was training for the lawn tennis contest by playing golf. Wilding was investigating American motors. Everybody was asking questions about the situation in Europe; nobody could supply

definite information. The Germans even asked me whether they ought to play! At that moment only Russia and France were regarded locally as her potential enemies. Froitzheim and Kreuzer were wondering how soon they would be required to don field grey. I referred them diplomatically to the German Consul. The local executive were in a dilemma. Barely more than a week had been given them to prepare for the match. The German team had come late into the competition after announcing their withdrawal, and it was only by the courtesy of Brookes, the Australasian captain, that the programme was reconstructed. Two match courts had been hurriedly prepared on the golf-course, stands had been erected, and lightning arrangements made to transport two thousand people out of town to a sequestered mountain outpost. If the match were cancelled many Americans would have been disappointed; on the other hand, it was just possible Germany and Australasia would be at war before it was finished. Well, the match took place and nothing untoward happened, except that the attitude of the crowd showed a strong partiality for the Germans. I do not think the war rumours—served up hot in the newspapers on the ground between the sets—caused this prejudice, though they undoubtedly increased the tension. What did affect the public was the extreme modesty of Froitzheim and Kreuzer, both on and off the court, and the natural desire of business men, who had purchased seats and travelled several miles to use them, to see a level match. Locally, too, I think the feeling prevailed that Brookes took the match too seriously. He was criticised when he would not permit Dunlop and Doust, his reserves, to pair up against the Germans in practice, and again when he asked the referee to remove Froitzheim from

a seat beside the umpire's stand while Kreuzer was playing Wilding in the first single. The latter objection was upheld and I think rightly. A non-playing captain may exercise his privilege to sit within the precincts of the court, but he does not and would not offer any advice as to tactics; he is there more in the capacity of a trainer. A playing captain should not converse with a member of his team during the progress of a match. At the same time, to be fair to Froitzheim, I do not think he had any intention to abuse his position. The Germans did not win a match. Kreuzer took a set from Brookes, and Froitzheim, leading 5–2 and 15–40 on Brookes's service in the opening set, had an easy chance to do the same thing. But the Australasians were never seriously threatened. Wilding won both his singles easily and the doubles was a hollow affair. Kreuzer was woefully uncertain off the ground. Froitzheim's position on court was fatal to combined progress.

Taking Niagara *en route*, I arrived at Boston for the British match against Australasia to find both teams somewhat out of heart. The heat was oppressive; the war rumours scarcely less so. On furlough from the regular army, Kingscote got on board an American liner only to remain in harbour for two days. Eventually he took train to New York and caught another vessel. It was felt that the match could only be played to fill in time before the English team left. Yet a large Boston crowd saw play of a strenuous character. Wilding had a tremendous third set of thirty games against Arthur Lowe before he could shake him off finally. Only once before (against Barrett at Wimbledon) had I seen Wilding so affected by the heat. If Lowe, driving with great resolution, could have come to the net when his opponent was almost

in extremis, a very different result might have been recorded. I have already described the match between Parke and Brookes. The doubles was not a contest. Out of the first seventeen games the English pair only won one. A few of Mavrogordato's forehand drives found holes, his lobbing was good in the third set, but he had no volleying offensive, while Parke was in his wildest mood. They were a scratch pair, and a scratch pair completely off their game. Neither of the remaining matches was played.

I sometimes wonder how 13,000 people could have concentrated on the challenge round in New York when their thoughts were centred on the European conflagration. The anxiety of the Australasian team was not lessened by the medley of reports circulated by the New York Press. I remember walking down Broadway one night in mid-August and seeing placarded up across the whole façade of a newspaper office: "Twelve British Cruisers Sunk." A hundred yards farther on I read that the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria had been assassinated. Going up to the roof garden at the Waldorf Astoria with Bobbie Powell, I asked an American journalist for further particulars. "Neither report," he said laconically, "is worth the electricity spent on it." And so it subsequently proved, but for the rest of our stay in America we never felt quite sure whether England had been submerged by an earthquake or not. No letters of credit were honoured; nobody knew when a passage could be booked home.

To divert our thoughts, we watched Brookes play McLoughlin in one of the most remarkable singles on record. It was a match so dominated by the service, yet containing many other good strokes, that for no less than thirty games in the first set neither man could

"break through." Winning the toss and serving first, Brookes always held the lead; at all costs, McLoughlin had to hold his own service games. Twice Brookes got to 15–40 in games which would have given him the set; on both occasions the young Californian brought the score to deuce by services which beat his opponent outright. This was sheer spectacular tennis, dear to the hearts of the American "fans"; despite the devitalising heat they cheered themselves hoarse. At last, in the thirty-first game, McLoughlin won Brookes's service after the Australian led 40–15, and then in the next game he went out with two masterly blows. Brookes told me afterwards that he had never served better in his life, but I doubt whether he showed quite the same speed of foot in coming in as in 1907, his first championship year at Wimbledon. The second and third sets were both well contested, but the end had been reached in the tremendous first. McLoughlin used the lob against a tiring man in the last few games.

America lost the Davis Cup in 1914, but McLoughlin gained ineffaceable fame. Two days later he beat Wilding on the same court. A certain pathos will always be associated with the encounter. It was Wilding's last match in public; McLoughlin was never the same player again. The Davis Cup issue had already been decided by the Australasian success in the doubles. It was an "extra turn," yet the win of the home player was well merited. He won the first two sets by superb aggression, lost the third in an inevitable reaction; then rested for seven minutes to renew a spirited and irresistible attack. The Wilding of Forest Hills, however, was not so well trained, morally and physically, as the Wilding of Wimbledon the previous year. Among the spectators was ex-President

Roosevelt, a keen devotee of lawn tennis and the founder of the political coterie at the White House known as the "Tennis Cabinet." I shall always remember the ex-President's remark made in private conversation during the international match. Somebody said the war would be over before Christmas. "Which Christmas?" he asked abruptly. He was under no delusions about the magnitude and duration of the struggle then launched.

Roosevelt was so right that five years intervened before an international match was re-staged. It was appropriate that liberated Brussels should witness the resurrection of the Davis Cup. Here in July, 1919, France engaged the Belgians, who to celebrate their emancipation were the first to challenge. Our own Association might have preferred another year for recuperation. We could not stay out, however, if France and Belgium, more disorganised internally than ourselves, desired to renew the competition at once. The feature of the 1919 matches was England's victory at Deauville after France seemed certain of success. I never expect to see Kingscote play quite so well again as when he beat Gobert in three sets in the decisive tie. His passing shots were wonderful in their accuracy and variety. Against Australasia at Sydney neither Kingscote nor Lowe was quite equal to the task of beating Patterson, and with the doubles always a certainty for the home side the Davis Cup remained in Australia. The results of 1919 cannot be judged by ordinary standards; the receding shadow was still too close.

Elsewhere in this volume I have dwelt on the triumph of Tilden and Johnston in 1920—a triumph so conclusive that France, England, and Australasia were defeated successively without the loss of a single

match. Three factors, I think, influenced the American success: their under-thirty vigour, the all-court qualities of their attack, the buoyant captaincy of Sam Hardy. Never was Davis Cup team so well equipped physically, temperamentally so efficient, nor led so judiciously. I was thrown into close contact with Hardy's youthful band, played with and against all of them, and met them daily in private life. As sportsmen they were all that sportsmen should be: quietly confident but never cocksure; ever ready to praise the skill and fortitude of their opponents; falling in loyally and to a man with their captain's arrangements.

Both Tilden and Johnston had a great respect for Kingscote and Parke. They deemed Kingscote superior in all-round skill, Parke possessing slightly the better match temperament. Gobert they did not see at his best and accordingly could not judge him. For Brookes, Tilden always entertained the greatest veneration, a feeling that cannot have been modified as a result of the matches at Auckland a few months ago. The admiration is mutual. Brookes always thought Tilden the greatest player America has produced—a tougher nut to crack than Johnston. Tilden is certainly more resourceful and can be more brilliant; his strategic coups would appeal to the kindred mind of Brookes. It remains to be seen—and the interval since the war has been very short—whether a counter can be found to his game. Johnston's sounder orthodoxy has provided it once, and either Johnston or somebody as good as Johnston may provide it again.

America should keep the Davis Cup this year, but she may not necessarily keep it longer. Australia and South Africa, matchless in physique, have resources developing unknown to the outside world. Japan

is a new factor with rich potentialities. England has a quiet habit of getting something she covets. Only one thing is certain. The Davis Cup will continue to foster the keenest rivalry among the lawn tennis countries of the world. Maintained on its present high level of sportsmanship and goodwill, it cannot fail to develop and inspire the game.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER COVER

THOSE who play lawn tennis under a glass roof should not throw stones, but the prejudice of the indoor man in favour of his own court is excusable. To obtain the fullest enjoyment out of the game, to attempt to exploit it at its highest standard, favourable conditions are essential. The more lawn tennis is pursued the more this truth will be appreciated. The worst of our English summer is that it may change the quality of the court and therefore the quality of the play with each successive week, sometimes with each successive day. The cultivation of good turf became a suspended art during the war and has barely recovered since. Really first-class grass courts are thus an extreme rarity. Even then their upkeep is a business requiring both brains and money.

Failing the good grass court, which is to be preferred above all others, one turns instinctively to the hard court of the Continental type. The non-turf court was not a novelty in England thirty years ago, but it is only in the last decade, since its construction has been carried out on systematic lines, that its real merits and its wide potentialities have been recognised. Most of the greatest players of the present century (the men and women of championship class, that is to say) have developed and in many cases acquired their skill on non-turf courts. It is quite obvious why this should be so. The bound on the non-turf

court, while it may vary according to the material employed, is uniform and tractable. Theoretically, the ball should behave in the same way on a grass court. In practice the bound varies with each turf; the whole plane is exposed to the vagaries of the weather; the average grass court has become the least reliable nursery. "Then why is it," I hear somebody ask, "that America and Australia, which use grass courts, have produced players so outstanding in merit?" The answer is that in neither country is the climate or organisation of the game the same as our own. In America the "dirt" court has long supplemented the turf court; it is the natural surface in California, the home of McLoughlin and Johnston. Nor do tournament organisers in America attempt to play matches on rain-sodden courts; they adjourn or even cancel them. The players of both countries, too, have concentrated more on service and volleying than on ground strokes. Their strokes are less affected by surface vagaries; their success does not depend so much on driving accuracy and therefore on a dependable and gaugable bound. I do not mean, of course, that the play of Tilden, Johnston, and Brookes is not influenced by surface, that they are indifferent to its texture or speed. But the modern game which these men exploit is founded on attack, and that attack has the net as its battle-ground and the volley as its main weapon. To combat this aggression the baseline player must have a perfect court; on any other he is hopelessly handicapped. If you examine the records of the centre court at Wimbledon or the east covered court at Queen's, you will find that the great back-court players have won their chief triumphs against volleyers on these floors, both of immutable strength and pace.

My first experience of indoor play was enjoyed at Auteuil, on the courts of the famous T. C. P. By rising early under the whip of Charles Voigt, then manager of the Easter meeting, I succeeded, some twenty years ago, in winning the handicap singles. The feat was a modest one, but it required some hardihood. My matches were scheduled for eight in the morning, and in order to play them I had to rise in Paris by artificial light, board a workman's boat on the Seine, and, reaching the Club, be prepared, on an empty stomach, to run four or five miles in pursuit of balls hurled over with appropriate gesture by a Frenchman many years my senior.

The game was less aggressive in those days and the coterie of first-class Englishmen who came over from Queen's were usually more than a match for the brilliant but somewhat erratic Parisians. Goodbody, G. M. Simond, Caridia, Ritchie, Hough, Mahony, and A. B. J. Norris made this annual Easter pilgrimage to Paris for several years. They were all sound players as well as students of form, and I do not doubt that their influence left its permanent mark on the game in France. I remember the great joy of the French when Max Decugis—in 1903, I think it was—first broke through this English ring and won not only the singles but the doubles as well. Max had been to school in England, and when only fifteen had won the Renshaw Cup for boys at Queen's, thereby gladdening the heart of his mentor, H. S. Mahony. Cowdrey, the present professional at Queen's, was a ball-boy on that auspicious occasion. Armed with a beautiful service, the perfect timing and vigour of which he reproduced in his smash, an artistically executed backhand, and volleying strokes of rare delicacy and finish, Decugis had, and still retains, a style upon which most of the

French players, consciously or unconsciously, founded their game. He was a spirited fighter, ever willing to move forward audaciously on the crest of good fortune, battling bravely against a mercurial temperament when his luck was out. If it be true, as I think it is, that the Easter tournaments at Auteuil gave France her first chance, as well as her first success, in international lawn tennis, it is as well that the part played by the British visitors, their influence on Decugis and the latter's influence on French lawn tennis generally, should be recognised.

The Tennis Club de Paris—founded by the late M. Armand Masson and now controlled successfully by his son, Willie Masson—has been the scene of many memorable matches. One particularly stands out in my memory. This was the final of the Easter meeting in 1911, when Wilding was beaten by Laurentz, a boy of sixteen. Wilding, then champion, had defeated Gobert, the conqueror of Decugis, in the semi-final and was expected to go forward to his goal comfortably. And perhaps in a good light he would have done. But the match was begun late, lasted two hours, and did not finish until nearly dusk, when neither the linesmen nor the players could see the lines clearly. Nevertheless Laurentz deserved great credit for his astonishing feat. He had lost the first two sets from four and was within a stroke of losing the match in the fourth set. A decision was given against Wilding which more than one onlooker regarded as faulty. Eventually, after a tremendous struggle, Laurentz won the bout at 13–11 and squared the match. In the final set Wilding led 3–2 and 4–3, but he was compelled by the sustained brilliancy of his opponent's attack to yield the set at 6–8.

An unprecedented demonstration followed. The

gallery went wild with ecstatic enthusiasm ; the young victor was kissed by his admirers. Wilding took his defeat quite philosophically. Finely as Laurentz served, audaciously as he volleyed, inspired as some of his best shots were, the impartial onlooker felt that his share of luck had been greater than his opponent's. A year later, when challenging Gobert for the national title at Neuilly, Laurentz met with a serious accident. One of Gobert's fastest services, bounding from the floor, flew off the edge of the receiver's racket into his left eye. The accident of course terminated the challenge round, Gobert then leading 4–2 in the first set. Subsequently the eye had to be removed. It was thought that Laurentz's lawn tennis career would be closed, but he met his disaster with buoyant fortitude. Only last year I saw him win the hard court championship at St. Cloud by a fine win over Gobert, his first in Paris since the mishap ; and at Dulwich this year he played a faultless game against Beamish, whom he beat with the loss of only four games in three sets. Now and then he misses a volley on his blind side. Yet despite his handicap his instinctive genius has developed and the promise of his boyhood has been redeemed.

Two other covered courts were added to Paris before the war—the Lawn Tennis Club de France at Neuilly and the Sporting Club de Paris. The first, which was well equipped and had a good light and floor, has not yet been reopened. The Sporting Club de Paris is flourishing, and resumed its popular Christmas tournament after the war—a meeting at which Jacques Brugnon, the new French champion, revealed his capacity a few months ago. The great advantage of these covered courts in Paris is that they incubate and foster new talent far more rapidly than

outdoor courts. The young player comes at once into an environment where hard hitting is the accepted gospel, where the inspiration first of Decugis, then of Gobert and Laurentz and now of Brugnon—to say nothing of other first-class players—stimulates their zeal and models their stroke production, and where, thanks to the communal spirit of France, there is a closer social intercourse among the members and inevitably a greater encouragement to youthful promise. If Paris had possessed no covered courts France would probably have produced none of the great players of the present century, for though her summer outdoor clubs are increasingly well patronised and their hard courts excellent—those at the Stade Français and at the Racing Club perhaps the best—the real nurseries of skill are under cover. The highest art of France is expressed where neither wind nor rain nor other extraneous influence can impair a scientific display. It is this preference for indoor conditions which always handicaps the leading French players when they compete on English turf in summer ; the disadvantage can even be traced when they go to their own outdoor courts, more especially those near a wind-laden coast. I hope a French team will visit America this year, for they have something in the symmetry of their style and the delicacy of their touch to teach every foreign country ; but I doubt whether, temperamentally, they will do themselves justice under conditions which must be entirely novel.

Lyons has a covered court with an asphalt floor painted green. Some of us used to break our journey back from the Riviera and, despite the sudden climatic change, thoroughly enjoy the open meeting held on this court in the spring. Wilding thrived on the surface and won the singles for four years without

losing a set. In doubles, however, the New Zealander was less dominant. In 1907 he and Kenneth Powell, his Cambridge partner, fought five sets before winning the final against Germot and D. P. Rhodes (the latter a tall American volleyer, who once beat Gore at Queen's), and, four years later, Wilding and Craig Biddle encountered Count Salm and Robert Kleinschrott in a very aggressive mood and were defeated in a four-set match.

Germany has a covered court at Bremen to which, before the war, Decugis paid a highly successful visit, winning all three championship events. Switzerland has excellent courts at St. Moritz (illuminated for evening play) and at Geneva; but it is Stockholm with which, after Paris, English pilgrims are most familiar. The famous Royal Club, Idrottsparken, founded by King Gustav when Crown Prince and used by him regularly, was burnt down a year or two ago. I paid several visits to this hospitable court. On the first occasion there was only one other English player present, and we were immensely flattered by receiving an invitation to dine with the Crown Prince at the Castle. Our host was exceedingly gracious, and in addition to drinking our health in Swedish punch, gave us autograph portraits and made us honorary members of his Club. The King is an enthusiastic student of the game and a player well above the average. He won the doubles championship of Sweden with Gunnar Setterwall in 1906, and I dare say valued the distinction almost as highly as his crown. During the open tournament in May he did not miss an important match. Nor was he content merely to watch the play; he discussed its points freely with the players and those whose opinions he valued.

J. M. Flavelle and F. W. Payn both had their

names on the Stockholm Cup before Ritchie, by three successive victories, bore it off to London. Then W. Boström, who was at the Swedish Legation in London during the war, won the singles, to the great delight of the royal patron, whose private secretary he was at the time. Setterwall was champion for two years, to be followed by Kenneth Powell. Powell and Gore had come over together from Queen's. By the irony of fate Gore found himself drawn against Kenneth in the first round of the singles. The match had to be played almost as soon as both had set foot in Stockholm, and the youngster beat the man who was to win the championship at Wimbledon two months later. Gore consoled himself by winning the doubles with Powell as well as the handicap singles from owe 50. A. W. Dunlop, the Australian, was a subsequent invader; in addition to winning the singles and doubles championships he was in the final of both the handicap singles and handicap mixed, bearing off the second.

When Mr. Grot built the Royal Club about twenty years ago he was faced with the difficulty of adequate lighting. Daylight in Sweden's winter is very precious, and every artifice must be adopted to preserve it. A glass roof was impossible, because the weight of snow would have broken it. Light through side windows was therefore necessary. But such an arrangement precluded parallel courts, as at Queen's; the courts had to be placed end to end. The result was a restricted run-back on one of the courts—a check to the runner in hot pursuit of a lob. Then the windows, while carefully designed and equipped with blinds which could be worked from below, did not run quite the whole length of each court; they stopped just before the base-line and left that important position

appreciably darker than the space in front The floor, considerably slower than Queen's, was varnished with a black paint, but the wear of footwork changed this staining to a brown tint about a yard behind the base-line—a minor but nevertheless noteworthy defect. Constructed at a cost of about 200,000 krona, the courts were generously equipped, although the space for spectators, accommodated in a gallery between the two courts and at boxes at the sides, would not have been adequate for important matches in London or Paris. There were spacious dressing-rooms, fitted with hot and cold showers, and a good lounge. As a rule ball-boys were not employed, the Swedes, who allow themselves a generous supply of balls, having cultivated the useful knack, when the service changed, of running the balls against the skirting of the boxes, and so, by an angular passage, into the opposite court. When I was last in Stockholm there were sixty members of the Royal Club, each of whom subscribed 125 krona a year. They had sole use of the courts between 3 and 6 p.m. At other hours non-members were admitted in payment of 3 krona per hour by daylight, or 6 krona per hour arc-lamp light. As a rule, during the winter months, the courts were occupied from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m.

No lawn tennis matches in Sweden ever attracted so much attention as the Olympic competition in 1912. The Royal Family were daily spectators; the galleries and the columns of the newspapers were filled to overflowing. I cannot recall any contests on which native votaries, from the King downwards, concentrated so much interest or displayed such a feverish anxiety to see every ball served. Sweden had been the only country, except England, represented in the first covered-court Olympic tournament held in London in

1908, and we returned this compliment by sending over a full team. France sent Gobert and Germot. Australasia was represented by Wilding. Bohemia and Denmark had envoys in court. It had been generally anticipated that the struggle for pride of place in singles would be between Wilding and Gobert, who had met a week earlier in the challenge round of the covered-court championship at Queen's, the Frenchman retaining his title after a memorable struggle. But the prophets were "dished." A little below true form, endeavouring when off court to combine business with lawn tennis, Wilding was beaten in the semi-final by Dixon. "C. P." undoubtedly deserved to win on the day's play. In all departments he was more resourceful and more accurate than his opponent. Varying the strength and direction of his service so that its pitch was never stereotyped, he came to the net with complete success. His volleys were not severe, but they were so well controlled and placed that the champion seemed to be caught perpetually on the wrong foot. Wilding's attack on Dixon's backhand was met either with a magnificent toss or a sliced return which kept so low that Wilding could not operate his forehand drive to any good purpose. Vainly Wilding endeavoured to drive Dixon back by coming to the net himself; the latter's passing shots were too good, and his adroit generalship, of which an attack on Wilding's backhand was the feature, usually ended in the champion retreating and Dixon gaining a winning position at the net. Dixon won the first set easily and lost the second after a struggle, but the third and fourth sets, though close, always gave me the impression that, unless his physical resources gave out, Dixon would win. I ought to add that Dixon had a narrow escape at the hands of Mavrogordato

in the second round. With superior ground strokes, Mavrogordato was within a point of winning both the second and fourth sets. Dixon's service and volleying just got him through.

Meantime Gobert had reached the final through Larsen, Kempe, and the brothers Lowe. Gobert had beaten Arthur Lowe so decisively the previous day that none of us expected him to be in peril against Gordon. Yet the match was the most protracted of the meeting, and there was a period at the close of the fourth set when it seemed that Gobert had become discouraged and that the Englishman's supreme steadiness and fortitude would prevail. Gobert elected to play Lowe with his own weapons—a choice, tactically unsound, that increased Gordon's confidence and allowed him to pit his own base-line precision and length against the Frenchman's. I remember that the Englishman's service was exceptionally severe and well directed—on many occasions he scored outright with his first delivery; but it was the extra pace on his forehand and his fine retrieving which won him the third and fourth sets with a loss of only four games. In the final set Lowe was forced to slacken his pressure; gaining a winning volleying position, Gobert captured it from two.

The final round provided a great triumph for the Frenchman. Dixon played just as finely as he had done against Wilding, but on this memorable Sunday in Stockholm, when spectators were perched like birds on the rafters of the roof in order to witness the contest, Gobert was more than his match. He won in three sets after Dixon, taking the first seven points, had led 3–1. The Frenchman's game was not entirely free from blemish. He served half a dozen double faults and two foot-faults; he lost one service game to love.

But his ability to win games when games were really needed, his restraint at critical moments, his power of anticipating the best drives, and cutting them off with a delicate volley, the destructiveness of his smashing—all these were virtues which, in combination, made the Frenchman's display wonderful. France also won the gold medals in doubles and deserved them. The Swedish couple, Setterwall and Kempe, had gained distinction by beating two of the English pairs (in each case after five sets), and in the final against Gobert and Germot they strove valiantly in one of the best matches seen under cover. In the end the French won by three sets to one, but the progress of each set was remarkably level. Probably the visitors' greater experience, especially of long matches, enabled them to bear the strain of a 26-game set with greater composure; and since they won their service games more easily, they always carried a slight moral advantage. The fact that only five service games were sacrificed during the whole match testifies to the high standard of the tennis.

I come now to Queen's, admittedly the world's headquarters of covered court lawn tennis. Queen's has other distinctive virtues besides the excellence of its three indoor courts. It is the traditional rendezvous for players from every land, the place to which the stranger turns intuitively for welcome, the clearing-house for "form," and (may I add?) the home of true sportsmen. The world without Queen's would be a very cheerless and inhospitable place—a feeling which persists in spite of competition from clubs more luxuriously equipped and more salubriously situated. Other games are pursued there, great crowds gather to watch Inter-Varsity sports and football; yet if you drop into Queen's on any day which is not dedicated

to one of these great festivals, you will find more lawn-tennis-playing members than any other. There are grass courts and hard courts, and great pressure on both; but it is the covered courts which have made the name and fame of Queen's.

Queen's was not the first home of the covered court championship. That event was inaugurated at the Hyde Park Court—the nursery of many fine players—in 1885, its promoters having migrated from the first covered lawn tennis court of all, the asphalt court of the Maida Vale Club, formed on a transformed skating rink in the Portsdown Road. But for the past quarter of a century—as far as my personal association with the game goes back—Queen's has crowned the covered court champion. The entry has fluctuated in size and quality. In the early Hyde Park days the number of competitors was quite small—even as few as three in 1889—but the opening of the Queen's arena gave impetus to the indoor game. An autumn meeting (the London Covered Court Championships) was added to the programme in 1903, and in some years has proved an even greater attraction than the spring tournament.

When I first went to Queen's the Dohertys were as victorious under cover as on the turf of Wimbledon. Reggie did not aspire to win the singles championship, but H. L. held that title for six successive years, retiring with it in 1906. The brothers were covered court doubles champions for seven years, but not in succession, for in 1904 and 1905 H. L. paired up with G. W. Hillyard. At the autumn meeting, R. F. partnered G. M. Simond for two years, on the second occasion the couple gaining a substantial victory over Brookes (then champion) and Hillyard in the final. This match emphasised the difference between the

complete armoury of R. F.'s strokes and the distinctive weapons employed by the great Australian. The covered court with its unyielding floor placed Brookes at a disadvantage. The "work" on his service was moderated, but—a more important factor—the defensive character of his backhand off the floor was visible. On the other hand, the orthodox stroke production of R. F. was vindicated in every department. His perfect service length without break was just as effective as, and less tiring than, any American service; his return of service on both wings was equally good; he could make a winning volley from any position without undue strain.

H. L. was never beaten at Wimbledon in singles during his championship reign, but he did not enjoy quite the same immunity at Queen's. Competing in the autumn meeting in 1904—his fourth indoor championship year—he found Ritchie's blade, used at close quarters, unusually keen, and in the end, after an exciting struggle, the great little man went down. The same two players had met in the covered court championship in the spring. Ritchie had then got very near to victory—so near, indeed, that a certain line decision had a substantial bearing on the result; but in October Ritchie volleyed more frequently and with greater severity than in May. The strange thing was that the victor did not win the tournament. Gore beat him in the next round, and then in the final Gore was overcome by Decugis. But of all the fine victories which Ritchie has won on the east court at Queen's during the past quarter of a century—and his name appears on the singles and doubles panels eleven times—I do not doubt he looks back with greatest pleasure on this one.

The indoor championship meetings of 1911 and

1912 were both memorable. At the first a foreign invader triumphed for the first time. André Gobert, a volatile youth of twenty with a wonderful service, had competed the previous year, coming within a stroke of beating F. G. Lowe, who subsequently won the title. But in 1911 Gobert was a vastly improved player, having gained in ground-stroke accuracy and restraint. He won both the singles and the doubles without the loss of a set—almost a revolution in those days for a Frenchman. His service was so deadly that he only lost two service games in singles throughout the meeting. As one of his victims was Ritchie, who had beaten Wilding after five strenuous sets, this feat of a player of twenty-one was remarkable enough. Brilliant as his volleying was, his base-line play was also sound ; he had no need to come to the net except when, by his own good driving, he had opened up the court for a winning volley.

Gobert has done many fine things in France and England and Sweden since his first championship year, but nothing was more gallant nor raised his reputation so high than his defence of the title against Wilding in 1912. The champion of Wimbledon had not lost a set on his way to the champion of the covered courts, and when he had taken the first set from three and saved the second from 2–5, leading by two sets to love, the issue seemed assured. But the play had been tense and good all through, and I remember cogitating at the time on what would happen if Gobert conquered his tendency to double fault and forced Wilding to meet the full blast of a consistent and accurate net attack. Well, the holder won the third and fourth sets by as brilliant a display of service and volleying as was ever seen at Queen's, and went on to establish a four-love lead in the fifth. Even then the match was

to provide a greater thrill. With splendid spirit and concentration Wilding pulled up to four-all. This was Gobert's supreme test of nerve. He surmounted it, and was thereafter stamped as a great player. Serving strongly, he won the ninth game and went out from 30 in the tenth. A week later, as I mention previously, he won the Olympic gold medal at Stockholm.

Military training and then military service—of the grimmest kind—checked Gobert's lawn tennis career for seven years, but he came back to Queen's in 1920 and regained the championship with a display which had lost none of its brilliancy and probably gained a little by its tactical restraint. Of all the giants ever seen under cover at Queen's he must rank first. There have been more reliable ground-stroke players—R. F. Doherty, H. L. Doherty, Wilding, and Ritchie—but none of these players could command Gobert's deadly service or the decisive volleys which are the complement to his ground strokes. A wood floor is his natural surface, partly because its faster play does not give his opponents time to erect tactical defences to his attack—a weakness on either wing, even a relative weakness, is fatal—and partly because his perfect timing of the ball, essential alike for force and finesse, can be accomplished more confidently under traffic conditions which are familiar and staple. It cannot be claimed for Gobert, nor for any other great artist, that he has always shone. Influences beyond his control—immoderate heat, or a bad line decision, for example—may check and even thwart his progress; like all Frenchmen he is susceptible to environment and stimulated by success. But he has won too many uphill battles, some of them from desperate positions, not to be regarded as a cool and courageous

fighter, as one who has disciplined his mind as well as his strokes.

No Australian has ever won the covered court singles championship; and the fact is, I think, an indication of where his strength lies and where his weakness as a player may be detected. The best Australian volleyers have not been able to defend their base securely against opponents who can force them back, nor who, by judicious service, can draw a defensive stroke from their weaker wing. Even in the first tournament season after the war, when many rackets were rusty and the standards upon which form was based had become faint and deceptive, this truth was revealed. Patterson was triumphant at Wimbledon and elsewhere, but in the more scientific test under cover at Queen's his limitations were seen. Thus did P. M. Davson, the champion of 1919, as he had been of 1913, demonstrate the superior value of all-round play over the specialist's art—a vindication driven home more forcibly last year by Tilden and Johnston.

Championship matches at Queen's may attract the attention of the outside world. It is the private match and the practice game which have made the Club what it is—the finest nursery for talent in this country and a place to which all grades of devotees may go for recreation and intercourse with their fellow-sportsmen. It has been my privilege at Queen's to partner Mr. Balfour against the present Lord Chancellor and Mr. Bonar Law. During the dark days of the war, when every one worth his salt had his hand to the plough, members of the Cabinet found in half an hour's lawn tennis the only respite from anxious conference or weary toil. Mr. Balfour has been a disciple of the game for many years; his

experience of varying courts is probably greater than any other Minister's. His style is that of a real tennis player; he therefore uses an unorthodox grip and invests the ball with cut. Just before the war he won a prize deservedly in the handicap doubles at Nice, partnered by Anthony Wilding. When motoring to the Nice Club to play off one of his rounds, he was struck in the face by a stone cast by some unruly urchin. Mr. Balfour made light of his injury and would not hear of any postponement of the match. He is a charming partner and opponent, ever courteous to both; as a student he brings to bear on the game the freshness of a versatile mind. Mr. Bonar Law, not less keen, can keep his end up in a private double with a shrewd regard for positional value. His forehand is not a vigorous stroke, but it is well placed. Lord Birkenhead would have to be heavily handicapped in any Ministerial tournament. He has often played in first-class company—once with McLoughlin in America—and is a gallant and untiring performer. When I have been lucky enough to be one of his guests at Charlton, his home near Oxford, or joined him on court at other private houses, he has always set the hottest pace, especially as a volleyer. His brother, Sir Harold Smith, may be more evenly equipped as a player; you are more likely to be caught out strategically by the Lord Chancellor. Several other Ministers and I know not how many legislators in both houses wield the racket. Captain Frederick Guest (an incomparable host) has built himself a private court at Roehampton—the first indoor court in England with an *en-tout-cas* floor. For a year or two Captain Guest rented Hartsbourne Manor, Miss Maxine Elliott's home at Bushey Heath, and to its beautifully equipped hard courts (on which

Wilding used to practise) many an Allied soldier and sailor visiting this country was bidden for an hour's recreation during the war. Lawn tennis, indeed, proved a very useful link between the nations which pooled their manhood in a common cause; it is an even stronger bond to-day.

London has other indoor courts beside those at Queen's. The Covered Courts Club at Dulwich was requisitioned for war services and was not forgotten by enemy air raiders. It has recently revived its activities and increased its membership, catering for night players as well as day. To Dulwich, every other year, Paris sends her best team for the inter-capital match, a contest owing its conception to Mr. P. W. Rotham, for many years honorary secretary of the Surrey County Association. J. Brugnon, the present national champion of France, first appeared on covered courts in this country at Dulwich.

I confess to a great liking for the "Tennis Hall" at Craigside, Llandudno, the venue of the Welsh covered court championships in the autumn. Its surface is appreciably slower than the floor of Queen's and therefore not so embarrassing to the grass-court visitor. But it is the environment of Craigside, the vitalising virtues of the Little Orme, the salt-water baths of the hospitable hydro, and the cheery welcome accorded by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Munro which in combination make a strong appeal. Some excellent matches, with an articulate gallery, have been seen at Craigside. R. F. Doherty was one of its earliest patrons and won the singles for three years. Incidentally, he used to give prodigious odds in the handicap events and prove his extraordinary accuracy by winning them. George Caridia has been a competitor for twenty-one years, and on nine occasions has won

the cup. Last year, when his coming-of-age was celebrated, he made a gallant fight in the final. Mavrogordato has also been a familiar figure. Ireland is usually represented by players as skilful as they are genial. There are pleasing tournaments in many picturesque parts of the world, but none of the smaller kind has the same traditions or attracts the same goodly company year after year as Craigside.

CHAPTER X

THE LESSON OF MLLE LENGLEN

WE have moved forward a long way since a former lady champion declared that the two games, that of men and that of women, "are absolutely different from one another and cannot in any way be compared in regard to skill or severity of strokes." Mlle Suzanne Lenglen, the present champion, may be a phenomenon to ordinary eyes. She is certainly not typical of the players of her own sex, but she remains a girl for all that, and the fact that she can now display as much skill as any man, and in variety of stroke and ease of execution is the equal to any male player now living, is a sufficient proof of feminine progress. Nor can it be said positively that this French girl has a capacity which cannot be acquired by those who have the same youth and enthusiasm and adopt the same methods of stroke culture and training.

Mlle Lenglen was delicate in her childhood and does not possess to-day a very robust constitution. She owes her supremacy not to any great bodily strength. She had, indeed, no physical advantages denied to others of her own age. Her parents played lawn tennis and gave Suzanne a racket when she was eleven years old. Soon she was playing with her father, showing a natural aptitude that induced Mr. Lenglen to teach her strokes in real earnest. After three months, despite a weak backhand, Suzanne

entered for the handicap singles at Chantilly, received half-thirty, and won the second prize. In two years she had won a level singles and at fourteen she partnered the late Captain Wilding in mixed doubles at Cannes. I chanced to be in the final of that event and so can testify to her ability. She seemed to stand little higher than her partner's waist and to be wielding a racket nearly as big as herself. What impressed me then, as it did again seven years later, when I partnered her at Mentone, was not so much her certainty of return and her extraordinary accuracy in placing for one so young, but her activity in recovering the most distant balls. Her mobility was far greater than any lady player in this country. She did not run, but seemed to leap over the court, and so well controlled was her footwork that she could hit the ball at the end of her stride as firmly and as surely as if she were standing still; she could recover balance and proceed to the next stroke without the slightest flurry or loss of breath.

Mlle Lenglen acquired this remarkable turn of speed by practising exclusively against men—and men of the Continental hard-hitting type too. I believe this habit is the secret of Suzanne's present superiority over every other woman player in Europe to-day. Her victims play singles among themselves, and both the strokes and counter-strokes in these tournament matches become stereotyped. There is a monotony of play that checks any genuine advance, a consolidation of defects very difficult to loosen.

It should be noted that Mlle Lenglen has not done anything daringly novel in acquiring her strokes and developing her tactics by regular practice with men. Miss Lottie Dodd, who was lady champion thirty

years ago, and almost as versatile as the present champion, learnt her game, as she learnt other games, in the company of men. Mrs. Sterry, another past champion, used to practise frequently with H. S. Mahony and other first-class men. Mrs. Lambert Chambers played many a private single, receiving points, against R. F. Doherty. But the difference between these ladies and Mlle Lenglen, and the difference in their relative play to-day, is that the little French girl began her real development almost where the others left off. She had the further advantage of playing systematically under consistent conditions and against players who had themselves absorbed the lessons of a past generation.

A question often addressed to me on the Riviera last winter was: "Will Mlle Lenglen ever be beaten by one of her own sex?" I heard the subject discussed on all sides: in the crowded tribunes at the Monte Carlo tournament; off the courts in the cafés; even in the feverish atmosphere of the gambling rooms. The champion had been through six or seven tournaments without losing a set, and, what was more significant, without the threatened loss of a set. Indeed, in no match in singles had she forfeited more than two games. On the other hand, she had won twenty love sets. Wonderful as her record was, if you consider that her opponents included the leading players of England and one of the leading players of America, it had its parallel in lawn tennis, though not in women's events. Wilding at the height of his Riviera power used to win his matches just as conclusively, and so did H. L. Doherty before him, though neither was proof against reverse when out of condition. The simple fact was that Mlle Lenglen stood in a class by herself, and therefore was just as

likely to win a set without losing a game as Miss Ryan when opposed to a player in a lower class.

But there was another reason why this little French artist won so consistently and with such a wide margin. Her style was the embodiment of ease and elegance; she produced the maximum of power with the minimum of effort; while others strained and pressed to make their strokes she executed them as Nature ordained they should be made. Therefore she did not draw on her nervous energy like her rivals. She was always playing well within the limits of her physical resources. Before she is given another supreme test—her last was at Wimbledon in 1919, and she has had none since—some player must come forward who can tax her physically. It may be that France herself will provide such a competitor. I doubt whether England can just yet, because England has too many open tournaments, and the passion for playing in them to the detriment of stroke improvement is too deeply rooted. The American girl may, with her great competitive zest, anticipate us. But she has founded her game on college volleying, and her ground strokes are not at present deep enough nor secure enough to become really dangerous against Mlle Lenglen. Moreover, the American girl, like the American man, has the national tendency to win quickly. She thinks of strokes before strategy. Mlle Lenglen possesses all the strokes and can concentrate her whole mind on strategy.

I consider her to be as much as half-fifteen better this year than last. She seems to vary her play, especially her ground-stroke play, much more. A striking example was her match against Mrs. Beamish on the Carlton courts at Cannes this year. Instead of driving deeply into the corners and making pace for

her opponent, she used the short diagonal stroke, pitching the ball on the side line just over the service line. The stroke drew Mrs. Beamish up the court and gave a much greater scoring power to the longer drive when it came. I am sure Mlle Lenglen had altered her tactics deliberately. The change came as a great surprise to Mrs. Beamish. "Why did not somebody tell me she was not going to hit hard all the time?" the English lady inquired afterwards. The reply might have been that Mlle Lenglen was not disposed to shout her plan of campaign from the roof of the Carlton Hotel. Besides I suspect she was too much of an artist not to get a little tired of playing the same type of game always. If she cannot enjoy the novel experience of defeat, at least she must be allowed the diversion of winning in different ways.

I have often been asked by irresponsible spectators why Mlle Lenglen does not compete in the men's singles. Why should she? That she would beat most of the men as easily as she beats all the women is certain, but she would not beat the very best men. If she attempted the task it is quite likely the strain would be sufficient to check her career. Nature has her ordinances and she does not like these to be abused. Mlle Lenglen is not a professional player willing to exploit her powers for the highest stake. She is an amateur and rightly jealous of her amateur status. Her parents have shown excellent judgment in regard to her training. They are wise not to listen to these suggestions of test matches against men in public. The game would suffer, and in the end Mlle Suzanne would suffer too. A private match is, of course, quite another matter.

I have said that Mlle Lenglen's supreme test was at Wimbledon in 1919. Who of the six thousand

people present, from the King and Queen downwards, will ever forget that wonderful challenge round, the finest and most thrilling ladies' single ever seen on any court in the world? The older men may have shed some of their speed and vision when they came again to the centre court after five years of war; the younger men may not have served a full apprenticeship in the tactical school. But the two ladies who fought for the championship—one the challenger, a girl of twenty, who was playing on a grass surface for the first time that year, the other, the holder, who, despite her long experience, had never before met such an active and versatile opponent—revealed from the first game to the last an accuracy of stroke, a consistency of attack, and a tenacity of purpose that raised the standard of women's play to a height never before reached. The challenger won that contest and became the first Continental lady champion at Wimbledon, but the honours were divided. Mrs. Lambert Chambers, heroic in her defence all through, made her supreme effort in the final set. She was 4–1 down, a desperate position in all conscience after an exhausting struggle on a hot day. She reduced her opponent's lead and at length, with both ladies playing superlatively fine tennis, reached 6–5 and 40–15. The excitement at that moment was intense. A supreme hush, so impressive when it engulfs large crowds, prevailed; the agony of Monsieur and Madame Lenglen, who, throughout the encounter, had been gesticulating to their daughter from the stand, can be imagined; I observed King George, his hat removed, straining forward in his seat in the committee box. Neither lady flinched; the great feature of the match was that both hit confidently all through. But, as fortune would have it, Mlle Lenglen, in winning the first of the two priceless

strokes, made a "flukey" volley; she was caught in a losing position and put her racket desperately in the way of the ball, which fell just out of the holder's reach. It was a lucky stroke, yet the wonder is, considering the length and strain of the match, more of its kind had not come before to one side or the other. Her second salving shot was a firm backhand winner down the line. She won with the score of 10–8, 4–6, 9–7—figures which ought to be engraved in the pavilion of the new Wimbledon.

Last year when the two ladies met again in the challenge round, their rôles of holder and challenger reversed, expectancy ran high, but the match was a disappointment. Physically Mrs. Chambers was not at her best and did not maintain anything like her driving length of the previous year. On the other hand, Mlle Lenglen was stronger in every department; she attacked at closer range and was more decisive on the volley as well as more circumspect in her strokes which preceded the "kill." At the end of the 1919 match one felt that the battle between the highest standard of British base-line play and the more advantageous all-court game of the young invader was indecisive; it remained for the latter to strengthen her art. But at the end of the 1920 match it was clear that a new epoch in women's play had opened, that a higher standard of skill had been established; in brief, that the old order had changed.

I do not share the belief that Mlle Lenglen is invincible, for the world is now a fairly large depository of lawn tennis talent, and the days when champions can reign supreme for a long sequence of years are probably over. But I am confident that the woman who is to beat her will have to be equally active and equally versatile, and that mere base-line strokes,

however forceful, will not accomplish the task. Meantime we may reflect that Mlle Lenglen has won and retained her position without violating the salient principles, either in stroke production or strategy, upheld by the British masters of the past. She hits the ball with an open-faced racket without undercut or top; the only stroke she has ever attempted to copy was the forehand drive of Wilding, and that she plays with less effort and more ease. She is, in fact, an orthodox player of the Doherty school, reaching the ball by sound footwork, hitting it with natural grace, and controlling its direction with an instinctive regard for the next positional move.

The lesson which Mlle Lenglen would appear to teach lawn tennis players of both sexes—for faults are common to both, though they may be concealed in one sex more than the other—is that no player can express the art of the game in its highest form unless the stroke equipment is complete. Departmental efficiency or even superiority is not enough; it will be countered and its limitations exposed by an opponent who possesses all-round strength. Twenty years ago, when I first took an intimate interest in lawn tennis, there were not nearly so many open tournaments in this country. The standard of play, nevertheless, was higher in both sexes—not at the very top nor at the bottom of the ladder, but among those who could be described as first-class or near it. The reason was, I think, that during the intervals between tournaments, to the benefit of their play when they entered the lists, men and women engaged in private matches. They played without the bustle and strain of public competitions; a higher quality of stroke was extracted because the sides were more evenly balanced; time was not occupied, as it is to-day, by tournament ties,

which by reason of their inequality must weaken rather than brace up the superior side.

In America, as I have intimated before, tournament organisation produces different results, partly because the supply of young players is larger, progress swifter and new blood reveals itself more regularly, and partly because the governing body favours certain invitation tournaments at which players of recognised ability alone compete. The invitation tournament might well be systematised in this country. Many clubs rely on the proceeds from their annual gate to recoup their exchequer and to carry out necessary extensions; they would lose nothing but probably gain a good deal by arranging a first-class programme daily. The benefit to the better players would be undeniable; they would not be given the opportunity to reduce the standard of their game. I am not suggesting that handicap events, which form the backbone of many holiday tournaments, should be curtailed. These are rightly open to all classes, and may be divided into sections in order to allow the adjustment of odds to be performed by a conscientious handicapper with some measure of equity. But talent does not develop very quickly in handicap events; it will develop more slowly still as the flood of entries rises. When the player of promise has reached a certain standard, it should be the business of the organisers to invite him or her to compete in a restricted level event. The old theory that champions are only made by rich parents and ten years' apprenticeship has been falsified by Mlle Lenglen and by several Americans. Boys and girls of the right physique and temperament (and both are improved by playing lawn tennis) may become champions if they produce their strokes correctly by private instruction, practise each

and every stroke in turn until all can be performed with equal facility, and regard tournaments as trials of strength already acquired.

England may not have won the championship for a dozen years; but it was her champions of the past who, by their skill and fortitude at home no less than by their missionary zeal abroad, inspired the players of other lands. I regard the competition of these oversea invaders as the greatest possible tribute the world could pay to a pastime invented by this country. It means that lawn tennis, alone among British sports, is the world's game. It also means that England will belie her history and Wimbledon its traditions if the leadership is not regained.

INDEX

Alexander, F. B., 71, 127
All England Club, 1, 6, 90
Allegheny Country Club, 138
Allen, C. G., 45, 50, 79
— E. R., 45, 47, 50, 78
— Rev. H. B., 78
Allens, the, 50, 78
Alonso, M., 60
Ambrose, C., 52
America, 28, 103, 136, 147, 151, 169, 174
American championships, 8, 28, 109
Americans at Wimbledon, 4, 27, 29, 31, 33, 103, 115, 121, 131, 134
— and Davis Cup, 10, 12, 21, 105
Antwerp, 62
Aspinall, Mr., 94
Atkinson, H. E., 81
Auckland, N.Z., 144
Australasia, 4, 124, 126, 136, 139, 155
— American players in, 126
Australasians at Wimbledon, 4, 25, 33, 124
Australia, 26, 58, 104, 119, 128, 143
Austria, 63
Auteuil, 148

Baddeley, W., 4, 5
Baden-Baden, 63
Balfour, Mr. A. J., 27, 81, 162
Ball-Greene, G. C., 5, 50, 76
Barcelona, 61
Barlow, H. S., 37
Barrett, H. Roper, 12, 15, 18, 25, 28, 37, 39, 47, 50, 56, 119, 126, 134, 140
Base-line players, 147
Battersea Park, 41
Beamish, Mrs., 169
— A. E., 43, 44, 85, 87, 92, 95, 101, 129, 150
Beaulieu, 82
Beau Site, Cannes, 72, 75, 80
Beckenham, 35, 37
Behr, K., 24, 125
Belgium, 61, 67, 104, 118, 143
Beloit, U.S.A., 108
Bersey, W. C., 39
Biarritz, 54
Biddle, Craig, 152
Birkenhead, Lord, 163
Bissing, Baron von, 60
Black, E. D., 119
Blackbeard, C. R., 60
Blackmore, S. Powell, 52
Blanc, M., 68
Bloemfontein, 92
Bonar Law, Mr., 162
Bordighera, 81
Borman, P. de, 63
Boston, U.S.A., 13, 24, 28, 129, 137, 140
Boström, W., 153
Bostwick, A. C., 73
Boucher, J. M., 45
Boulogne, 54
Bourke, H. L., 52
Bournemouth, 50
Bremen, 152
Brighton, 46
Bristol, 48
— courts, Beaulieu, 82
Brookes, N. E., 2, 8, 9, 13, 18, 23, 25, 28, 33, 36, 78, 103, 104, 112, 114, 122, 127, 129, 137, 141, 147, 158
Brown, E. A., 46
Brugnon, J., 150, 164
Brussels, 62, 143
Budapest, 64
Bulawayo, 93
Bundy, T. C., 114
Burke, Tom, 80
Burrow, F. R., 46, 49
Buxton, 44

Cambridge, 5, 39, 75, 122
Canada, 90, 132, 133, 137
Cannes, 67, 74, 76, 80, 92, 167
— Club, 81
Cape Town, 89, 90, 93, 95, 100, 165
Caridia, G. A., 9, 165
Carlton courts, Cannes, 81, 169
Carpentier, 51
Casdagli, X. E., 44
Centre court, the, 4, 9, 14, 147
Chambers, Mrs. Lambert, 36, 43, 168, 171
Championships, the, 3, 33, 175
Chicago, 108, 137
Chiswick Park, 35
Christchurch, N.Z., 129
Churchill, Mr. Harry, 34
Clarke brothers, 29

Clothier, W. J., 30, 121
Cockran, F. E., 86, 101
Connaught, Duke of, 90
Continent, lawn tennis on the, 53
Covered courts, 146
— — championships, 28, 158
Cowdrey, 148
Craigside, 164
Crawford, F. R. L., 47, 48
Crawley, A. E., 52
Cricket and lawn tennis, 3
Crowther-Smith, H. F., 52
Croydon, East, 40
Crystal Palace, 164

Davis (S.A.), 99
— Cup, 10, 16, 21, 28, 56, 86, 103, 118
— Dwight F., 12, 103, 118
Davson, P. M., 28, 56
Deauville, 54, 143
De Beers mines, 100
Decugis, M., 60, 76, 77, 148, 152, 159
Denmark, 155
De Villiers, 86
Devonshire Park, Eastbourne, 18
Diemerkool, 62
Dieppe, 54
Dinard, 54
Dixon, C. P., 15, 21, 36, 48, 85, 90, 95, 129, 134, 155
Doherty, H. L., 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 24, 37, 70, 75, 115, 121, 123, 158, 168
— R. F., 4, 7, 13, 70, 76, 82, 90, 116, 121, 123, 158, 164, 168
Dohertys, the, 4, 5, 12, 18, 27, 33, 38, 69, 75, 76, 81, 115, 120, 123, 158
Dodd, G. H., 101
— Miss L., 167
Doust, S. N., 28, 43, 47, 111, 138, 139
Drabble, G. C., 49
Drive Club, the, 41
Duckworth, Mr. J., 42
Dulwich, 150, 164
Dunlop, A. W., 111, 123, 129, 139, 153
Durban, 89, 93
Dwight, Dr. J., 30, 67

Eastbourne, 17, 46
Eaves, W. V., 9, 23, 46, 50, 54, 68, 76, 84
Edgbaston, 8, 18, 43
Edward, King, 38, 81
Elgood, C. A., 37
Elliott, Miss Maxine, 163
Escombe, L. H., 84
Evelegh, B. C., 38, 45, 49
Exmouth, 48

Fenner's, 27
Field, 49
Fisher, F. M. B., 35
Flavelle, J. M., 5, 132, 152
Fleming, Tom, 80
Folkestone, 16, 47
Forest Hills, New York, 3, 109, 142
France, 53, 56, 66, 104, 118, 143, 149, 157
— at Wimbledon, 4, 16, 33
Froitzheim, O., 59, 63, 132, 138

Garfit, Miss, 44
Garland, C. S., 30, 44, 104
Gauntlett, V. R., 101
Geneva, 65, 152
George, King, 171
German players, 60, 63, 66, 76, 81, 132, 138
Germans at Wimbledon, 33
Germot, M., 60, 152, 155
Gipsy Club, 39
Gobert, A. H., 16, 27, 28, 35, 53, 55, 59, 62, 104, 143, 144, 149, 155, 160
Goodbody, M. F., 149
Gore, A. W., 7, 9, 14, 18, 22, 24, 47, 119, 126, 152, 153, 159
Graham-White, Mr., 41
Greene, Miss A. N. G., 73
Greville, G., 24, 36
Groote Schuur, 99
Guest, Captain Frederick, 163
Gustav, King, 81, 152

Hackett, H. H., 21, 133, 134
Hamilton, W. J., 4
Hampton, G. C., 40
— J. L., 40
Hardy, S., 144
Hartsbourne Manor, 163
Havre, 34
Heath, R. W., 129
Hendon, 41
Hillyard, G. W., 3, 7, 9, 24, 50, 70, 84, 113, 158
Holland, 62, 118
Homburg, 63, 75
Hopwood, Lord, 91
Hough, R. B., 148
Howard, Hon. Mrs. Geoffrey, 96
Hyde Park Club, 158
Hyères, 81
Hythe, 47

India, 118
Ireland, 4, 165
Italy, 65

Jacob, S. M., 87
Japan, 4, 30, 38, 39, 62, 118, 144

Joannis, M., 58
Johannesburg, 3, 86, 89, 93, 100, 101
Johnston, W. M., 4, 11, 14, 18, 30, 38, 103, 107, 112, 115, 136, 143, 144

Kempe, C., 156, 157
Kimberley, 90, 92, 100
King, Lionel, 46
Kingscote, A. R. F., 28, 30, 37, 47, 56, 62, 65, 104, 137, 140, 143, 144
Kinzl, R., 60, 64, 122
Kissengen, 64
Kitson, H. A., 101
Kleinschroth, H., 60, 79, 133
— R., 60, 79, 152
Kreuzer, O., 133, 138
Kumagae, I., 62

La Festa courts, 74
Ladies' play, 112, 167
Ladysmith, 93
Larcombe, D. R., 51
— Mrs., 43, 51
Larned, W. A., 8, 10, 30, 86, 114, 115, 120, 129
Larsen, E., 156
Latham, G. C., 97
Laurentz, W. H., 56, 60, 104, 149
Lausanne, 65
Lawford, H. F., 2, 80
Lawn Tennis Association, 32
— — growth of, 34, 108
Leamington, 44
Leicester, 14, 44, 50
Lenglen, M. Chas., 67, 166, 171
— Mlle, 4, 33, 52, 59, 62, 67, 69, 74, 80, 166
Lersner, Baron von, 64
Le Touquet, 54
Lille, 54
Little, R. D., 10, 18, 123
Liverpool, 42, 138
Livingstone, 97
Llandudno, 164
London championships, 38
— Country Club, 41
Long, Melville, 128
Lowe, A. H., 137, 140, 143, 156
— F. G., 36, 39, 62, 65, 78, 86, 88, 92, 95, 101, 129, 156, 160
Lyons, 151

McDonald, H. R., 52
McKane, Miss K., 62
McLoughlin, M. E., 3, 18, 21, 26, 30, 33, 43, 103, 107, 114, 121, 128, 131, 132, 134, 141, 147, 163
McNair, Mrs, 62
Mahony, H. S., 24, 37, 148
Maida Vale Club, 158
Manchester, 42, 90
Margate, 47
Marienbad, 64
Marriott, C., 51
Martin, Miss L., 43
Mavrogordato, E. E., 52
— T. M., 28, 34, 43, 47, 78, 137, 141, 165
Meers, E. G., 13
Melbourne, 9, 28, 122, 127, 129, 136
Mentone, 65, 68, 74, 79, 167
Methuen, F. M. Lord, 85, 95
Michael, Grand Duke, 81
Milford, H. S., 40
Mishu, N., 40, 64
Monaco, 74
Monte Carlo, 8, 24, 68, 71, 75, 168
Morton, Miss A. M., 39
Munro, R., 164

Napoleon, 80
Neuilly, 150
Net-cord strokes, 7
Newcastle, 18, 43
Newport, Mon., 18, 44, 86
— U.S.A., 8, 110
New York, 30, 86, 107, 136, 141
— Zealand, 35, 104, 119, 126
Nice, 13, 67, 71, 74, 75
— Club, 67, 73, 163
Nisbet, H. A., 12, 22
Norris, A. B. J., 148
Northern Championships, 17, 42
Norton, B. I. C., 47
Norwood, 20, 39
Nottingham, 44, 50, 132

Olympic Games, 62, 154
Ostend, 62

Paris, 27, 54, 64, 138, 148
Parke, J. C., 13, 43, 104, 112, 129, 134, 137, 141
Patterson, G. L., 3, 18, 19, 27, 36, 40, 62, 104, 143
Payn, F. W., 152
Pearce, Dr. F. H., 113
Pim, J., 4, 5, 46, 120, 129
Pittsburg, U.S.A., 137
Port Elizabeth, 92, 94
Powell, K., 27, 39, 152, 153
— R. B., 34, 43, 54, 78, 85, 89, 95, 111, 133, 137, 141
Prebble, A. D., 48
Press and lawn tennis, 51
Pretoria, 93, 95
Price, Hamilton, 52
Punch, 52

Qa Kamba Club, 86

Queen's, 4, 20, 24, 35, 38, 56, 71, 147, 154, 157
Queenstown, 94

Racing Club, Paris, 151
Rahe, F. W., 60, 78, 80, 133
Raymond, L., 43, 62
Renshaw Cup, 148
Renshaws, the, 2, 4, 18, 67, 74, 80
Rhodes, Cecil, 99
— D. P., 78, 152
Rhodesia, 66, 97, 100
Ridding, C. H., 82
Rieck, Frl., 74
Riseley, F. L., 9, 12, 13, 14, 23, 43, 69, 124
Ritchie, M. J. G., 13, 15, 24, 28, 36, 70, 71, 75, 83, 148, 153, 159
Riviera, the, 55, 66
Rochester, U.S.A., 108
Roehampton, 40, 163
Rome, 65
Rondesbosch, 90
Roosevelt, President, 143
Rootham, P. W., 164
Rowan, Dr., 91
Royal Club, Stockholm, 152
Russia, 67
Ryan, Miss, 169

St. Cloud, 3, 57, 65, 109, 150
St. Moritz, 65
Salisbury, S.A., 93
Salm, Count, 40, 64, 79, 152
San Francisco, 41, 107, 129
San Remo, 74, 81
Saxmundham, 50
Scarborough, 43
Scheveningen, 5
Schools, lawn tennis in, 42, 174
Schulenburg, Countess, 73
Schwengers, B. P., 133, 138
Scotland, 90
Scrivener, H. S., 49, 52
Setterwall, G., 152, 157
Shimidzu, Z., 30, 38, 60
Simond, G. M., 22, 58, 74, 78, 82, 148, 158
Smith, S. H., 9, 12, 13, 16, 23, 24, 36, 43, 45, 50, 69, 112, 120, 124
— Sir Harold, 163
South Africa, 6, 60, 62, 84, 119, 144
South of England Championships, 46
Spain, 61, 65, 67, 118
Sporting Club de Paris, 150
Steevens, G. W., 93
Sterry, A., 36
— Mrs., 36, 43, 44, 168
Stockholm, 54, 152, 161
Stutterheim, 98
Surbiton, 28, 35
Sutton, Miss M., 43
Sweden, 65, 81, 152, 160
Switzerland, 65, 152
Sydney, N.S.W., 28, 128, 129, 143

"Tennis Cabinet," 143
Tennis Club de Paris, 148
Thomas, R. V., 29
Tilden, W. T., 3, 4, 8, 11, 14, 18, 29, 30, 38, 44, 52, 103, 112, 115, 121, 129, 136, 143, 162
Timmis, E. W., 113
Tournaments in Great Britain, 32
Tripp, Miss J., 73
Turnbull, O. G. N., 47, 62

Umpiring, 113

Vanderbilt, Mr., 77
Victoria Falls, 87, 93, 97
Vienna, 64
Voigt, C. A., 63, 68, 70, 148
Volleying, value of, 23

Wallace, Mr. A. L., 97
Wanderers' Club, Johannesburg, 3, 86, 101
War, effect on lawn tennis, 2, 20, 27, 32, 54, 63, 104, 146, 164
Ward, Holcombe, 10, 12, 18, 30, 115, 120
Webster, Tom, 52
Wesseley, C. von, 60, 64, 122
West Side Club, New York, 110
Whitman, M. D., 8
Wilding, A. F., 2, 3, 8, 10, 13, 16, 18, 23, 25, 27, 35, 39, 43, 55, 59, 63, 74, 75, 82, 103, 114, 116, 122, 125, 127, 134, 140, 149, 151, 155, 160, 163, 167, 173
Williams, R. N., 24, 30, 65, 103, 133, 134
Wimbledon, 1, 12, 53, 58, 61, 64, 65, 103, 109, 121, 124, 131, 175
Winslow, C. L., 44, 88
Wood, A. O'Hara, 104
— P. O'Hara, 29
Woosnam, M., 47, 62
Worthing, 47
Wrenn, R. D., 30
Wright, Beals, 11, 24, 30, 37, 75, 115 120, 122, 125, 129
— Irving, 75, 77

Zambesi, the, 87, 93, 97
Zerlendi, A., 63

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